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IRISH VISIONS OF THE OTHER-WORLD

IRISH VISIONS OF THE OTHER-WORLD

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF MEDIÆVAL VISIONS

BY

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"And the Angel said, Come, O happy *Soul, return unto thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*" (Ps. cxvi. 7).

THE VISION OF TUNDAL.

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PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES CONSULTED AND SOURCES USED

Abbreviations Employed

C.Z. = Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie.
E.E.T.S. = Publications of the Early English Texts Society.
P.R.I.A. = Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.
R.C. = Revue Celtique.
J.T.S. = Journal of Theological Studies.
P.L. = Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.

Vision of Fursa (Bede, H.E., book III, chap. xix, and Aelfric's *Homilies*, vol. ii).

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INTRODUCTION

DR. E. J. BECKER, in his Thesis entitled *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of the Mediæval Visions of Heaven and Hell*, etc., has truly said that the only means by which a complete and satisfactory final result can possibly be obtained with respect to the vast question of mediæval visions is through a large number of special studies tending towards the same end. In this book I have attempted such a study of the visions found in Irish ecclesiastical literature down to the closing years of the twelfth century. Much of this work is based on articles contributed by me to the *Journal of Theological Studies*, to the *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, and in a more especial degree to those published in the *Proceedings* of the Royal Irish Academy. In some respects, however, I have modified my conclusions as given therein, notably in the case of the second part of the *Vision of Adamnán* (designated as *Ad.* II), which I now believe, for reasons fully set forth hereafter, to be an *early* vision descriptive of Hell, and not a description of Purgatory tacked on as an appendix to *Adamnán*.

But perhaps the most striking feature in our Irish Visions is that change in their eschatology which took place about the tenth century, and by which they are definitely divided into two classes. On this important feature I have laid considerable stress, and as a result it may be possible for scholars to assign at least an approximate date to other

Irish ecclesiastical documents by means of the eschatological views contained in them.

I must thank Mr. E. J. Gwynn (now Dr. Gwynn, and Provost of Trinity College, Dublin) for his kindness in dating for me some of the sources used, as well as in answering many questions. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Miss Mary E. Byrne, B.A., for drawing my attention to several passages which I might have overlooked, and for translating some of them for me. She was also good enough to find time to read over in manuscript the chapter on the *Imrama*. I must also thank the President and Council of the Royal Irish Academy for permission to make use of papers contributed by me to their *Proceedings*.

St. John D. Seymour.

Donohill Rectory,
Donohill,
Tipperary.
St. Patrick's Day,
1930.

IRISH VISIONS OF THE OTHER-WORLD

Chapter I

EARLY VISIONS AND VISION-FRAGMENTS

Introductory matter. The Vision of Fursa. The Vision of Laisrén. Latter part of the Vision of Adamnán. Date of same. Points in it considered. A fragmentary Vision of Hell. Vision in the *Voyage of the Ui Corra*.

WHEN Irish Visions of the Other-World and cognate ecclesiastical documents are examined and analysed it will be found that their eschatology, the views put forward in them with respect to the location of souls immediately after death, instead of developing along progressive lines underwent a sharp radical change about the tenth century. Thus the eschatology of the Irish Church in the period covered by this book will be found to fall into two divisions. In the first, which ends with the round date given above, Hell is not regarded as merely the abode of the eternally lost; it has purgatorial qualities attributed to it, while from it souls can be freed under certain conditions. At the same time the Fire of Doom, that great conflagration which was to envelop the world at the Last Day, was conceived of as acting purgatorially with respect to the small faults incurred by the righteous, though obviously it had to exercise those qualities at a particular period, namely, the end of the

world, not in any intermediate state. In the second period, which is closed by the Vision of the Knight Owen in 1153, Purgatory, though not so named, emerges as a distinct state. Hell has then become the abode of the eternally lost, from which none can ever be brought forth. The Fire of Doom has by this lost its purgatorial qualities; it has no effect on the righteous, but merely serves as a preliminary punishment for the lost.

For the eschatology of the first period but little information can be derived from the visions themselves, as they are unfortunately so fragmentary. The complete text of an Irish Vision which could certainly be dated as prior to the tenth century is much to be desired. Nevertheless, the scanty information vouchsafed in them can be supplemented by ecclesiastical documents, some of which can be dated with certainty, and with the assistance of these it is possible to form an adequate conception of the doctrine relative to a future state, especially on its purgatorial side. But for the views held with respect to this in the second period, the visions themselves afford ample information. From them we can gather in a most satisfactory manner what theories were put forward with respect to the location of souls after death, and the possibility of their undergoing purgation for their sins. As is only to be expected, these later visions say nothing about the Fire of Doom, as it lay entirely outside their province, but from contemporary ecclesiastical documents it is possible to recover the views held with respect to it in the second period.

This chapter will be devoted to a study of the

brief visions and vision-fragments of the earlier period. First of all the visions themselves must be given in brief, and subjected to an examination; then, from the matter contained in them and in contemporary ecclesiastical documents, an attempt will be made to give a connected account of the eschatological views current in Ireland before the tenth century. These must then be compared with those held by the Anglo-Saxon Church in England.

The earliest recorded vision of an Irish saint is that of Fursa, which is related somewhat briefly by the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*,[1] and at more length by Aelfric in his *Homilies*.[2] This last we have followed here.

Fursa was an Irishman, a native of Munster, who spent a considerable portion of his missionary life in the East of England and in Gaul. In A.D. 633 he came over to Britain, and founded a monastery at Burghcastle in Suffolk. It appears that it was in this place that his visions were beheld.

When he had raised a mynster, and filled it with pious men, he fell sick, and seemed as if he were about to die. Two white-winged angels took his soul and bore it between them, while a third armed with shield and sword flew before them. As they flew a pleasant sound came from their wings, while they sang *Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem*, etc.; then they heard the song of many thousands of angels. After this an angel of the celestial host commanded the angels who were bearing the soul to bring it back to the body. Though Fursa was unwilling to return this wa

[1] Book III, chap. XIX. [2] Vol. ii, p. 333.

done, and the angels promised to come to him again and take him to themselves. When Fursa awoke those who stood around him told him that his body had lain dead on the floor from evening till the following morning.

On the third midnight the same three angels came to Fursa and took his soul. As they journeyed the devils met them and shot fiery darts against the soul which were all warded off by the angel with the shield. Then a long argument took place between the devils and the angels about the soul, in which the former cited Scripture to their purpose very appositely. When the adversaries were put to silence, the angel bade Fursa look on the world. "He looked back, and saw, as it were, a dark dell, very low; and saw there four immense fires kindled. And the angel said to him, 'These four fires will consume all the world, and burn the souls of those men who through transgression have made void the confession and promise of their baptism.'" The angel then explained the significance of these fires, as in Bede's account.[1] When they approached him he feared that he should be burnt, but the angel said to him: "That will not burn thee for a punishment which thou hast not in life kindled by thy sins. Though this fire is terrible and great, nevertheless it burns everyone according to his lusts." The devils again approached them, and

[1] In the Vision of the Monk of Wenlock (Kylie, *English correspondence of St. Boniface*, p. 78) the visionary beholds a vast fire which seemed as if it would embrace the whole world. It might be noted that the Vision of Fursa is included in the list of tales in the Book of Leinster.

accused Fursa of having taken a little previously the garment of a dying man. They proceeded to argue, the devils again quoting Scripture, until a host of angels and holy souls flew towards them and put the devils again to flight. Amongst these souls he recognised two of his countrymen, venerable priests, Beanus and Meldanus by name.

Then came angels flying from "the heavenly secrecy," who ordered that Fursa should again return to the body. As they went back through the "penal fire" the devils shot forth, and hurled the burning soul of an unrighteous man at Fursa, so that his shoulder and face were burnt by the penal fire.[1] The angels thereupon seized the soul and flung it back into the fire, but not before Fursa had recognised it as the soul of the man from whom he had taken the garment. Then the angel said to Fursa: "That which thou thyself has kindled, that burneth on thee. If thou hadst not received the garment of this sinful man at his decease his torment could not have injured thee."

Then the angels brought back the soul, and set it on the roof of the church where the corpse lay surrounded by people. Fursa's soul hated the thought of re-entering the body, but the angel bade it do so, and it saw the body opened under the

[1] This is an early instance of the visionary suffering torment. St. Anschar, in his vision, is left in Purgatory for three days, which seemed like a thousand years. While there he suffers from the dense darkness, and from a feeling of suffocation and pressure (Migne, P.L. vol. cxviii, cols. 962–3).

breast.[1] The angel then told him that when he was restored to life he should sprinkle his body with font-water, and thereafter he should feel no soreness except the burn that he got from the soul. After his second return to life Fursa spent twelve years preaching in Ireland and Scotland, and afterwards over the whole English nation, after which he went to the land of the Franks. He is supposed to have died about A.D. 650.

On this, little comment need be made. The story has every appearance of being a genuine account of a series of visions seen by one who fell into trances as a result of continual fastings, penances, and mortifications of the body. It has nothing of the artificiality of some of the later visions. The fires in it seem to be a blending of the purgatorial fire with that of the Fire of Doom. Perhaps the most important part in the vision is the introduction of the conception of the visionary himself suffering torment—a conception which was greatly elaborated in the two later Irish Visions, those of Tundal and Owen.

The next vision to be described is that of Laisrén, who is possibly to be identified with that abbot of Lethglenn or Leighlin who died A.D. 638. This has been edited and translated in *Otia Merseiana*, vol. i, by Dr. Kuno Meyer from a fifteenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library; from the linguistic evidence the editor is inclined to assign the original to the latter half of the ninth, or the

[1] In that curious Irish piece, *The Two Deaths*, the soul of the sinner is brought out by Satan from under the left breast (J.T.S., vol. xxii, p. 19).

opening years of the tenth, century. It is, unfortunately, only a fragment.

Once Laisrén went presumptuously to purify a church in Connaught. At the end of a nine-days' fast he fell asleep in the church, but was awakened by a voice calling to him ; this came from a shining figure that stood between the chancel and the altar. When it bade Laisrén come towards him he felt his body quivering all over, and then perceived his soul hovering above his head. He saw the church open above, and two angels taking the soul between them and ascending into the air. After this he beheld a host of angels coming to meet it, as well as three hosts of hideous demons arriving with fiery spears and javelins. The leader of the latter taxed the soul with all the misdeeds she had done in life, but was answered by the " angel of the great host," who bade him and his companions be gone.

When they had departed the angel of the great host said to the two attendant angels : " Now take this man that he may see Hell." Thereupon he was taken to the north, to a great glen. " He sees a great pit, as it were the mouth of a cave, between two mountains, which they entered above. For a long time they went along the cave, until they came to a great high black mountain before them at the mouth of Hell, and a large glen in the upper part of the mountain. This was the nature of the glen : it was broad below, narrow above. That cave was the door of Hell and its porch. And he saw the folk of the island (Ireland), whosoever of them were, when in the body, under the displeasure of God. They were in the middle of the glen wailing."

Laisrén's soul is greatly moved at the sight, and seeks permission to speak to each of them, but is not permitted, "lest they should despair."

After this the soul is conducted into Hell itself. Here the unknown writer draws a vivid word-picture in which he not only sees what he describes, but makes his readers see it as well. The soul beheld "a sea of fire with an unspeakable storm and unspeakable waves upon it. And he saw the souls aflame in that sea, and their heads all above it; and they wailing and lamenting, crying woe without ceasing throughout the ages."

Some of the souls had fiery nails through their tongues, their ears, or their eyes. There were others with their mouths gaping, while demons were "compelling" them (urging them on?) with fiery forks. The soul desired to know the reason for these different torments, and the angel (there has been only one in attendance for some time) told her that those who had nails through their tongues had spent their time in uttering falsehood, and perjuring themselves, and blaspheming, and talking vaingloriously, instead of praising God.

Here the fragment breaks off abruptly, to the present writer's regret. A complete text is much to be wished for.

There is one item in the vision which seems to present a unique feature. Those people of Ireland who had died in their sins are placed in the middle of a glen which serves as an ante-chamber to Hell proper; they experienced no torment except that of utter despair. Has the writer's love of his countrymen urged him to locate them in a region

where they might experience the minimum of suffering? And does he conceive of Hell proper as being exclusively tenanted by non-Irish?

This vision, as far as it goes, contains no indication of the possibility of souls being released at any time from Hell. At first sight it would seem as if it did. When Laisrén is forbidden to speak to the souls, lest they should despair, the angel adds: "Tell them, however, to repent, for whoever shall make repentance and end in it shall not be in this place, but will be in a place of comfort away from this evil, and his repentance will take him past it." From this it might be conjectured that these souls, on their true repentance, would be freed from the glen of despair and taken to Heaven. But a closer study of the whole passage shows that the pronoun "them" in this and the second succeeding sentence has reference to the people of Ireland *who are still in the body*, not to those who have died under the displeasure of God. But as the vision is only a fragment we have not enough of it to show whether it contained the belief that souls could be freed from Hell. Seeing, however, that it belongs to the earlier period it may be assumed that it did.

There are some parallels between the visions of Laisrén and of Fursa. In both cases the inanimate body of the visionary is connected with a church. Three angels conduct Fursa, and three are for a little associated with Laisrén. Commands are given by "an angel of the celestial host" (Fursa), and "an angel of the great host" (Laisrén). Both souls are met and accused by demons, the latter in both visions quoting Scripture.

The next vision-fragment to be considered is one which has hitherto not been regarded as belonging to the earlier period of Irish vision-literature, but has always been assigned to a very much later date. We refer to the latter half of the *Vision of Adamnán*, which is intended to contain a description of Hell and its plains.

Four texts of the *Vision of Adamnán* are known:

(1) That in the Leabhar na hUidre (L.U.).

(2) That in the Leabhar Breac (L.B.).

(3) That in a MS. in the Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris (P.).

(4) A text of the vision is embedded in the piece known as *The Voyage of St. Columba's Clerics* (S.C.C.).

Another text existed in the Book of Lismore, but only the conclusion remains.

Of these four texts the first two have been edited without translation in *Irische Texte*, vol. i; while the third and fourth have been respectively edited and translated in R.C., vol. xxx, pp. 349 ff., and R.C., vol. xxvi, pp. 130 ff.

The L.U. text has been translated by Dr. Whitley Stokes in *Fraser's Magazine* for February 1871, and by Mr. C. S. Boswell in his work, *An Irish Precursor of Dante*. In all four texts the vision is found in the same form, i.e. a description of three states in the Other-World, with a very brief allusion to Hell, followed by what purports to be a description at length of Hell and its torments. It is indeed to the credit of the unknown writer of the vision proper that, unlike so many mediæval writers, he is content to dismiss Hell in a sentence or two, instead of gloating over lurid details. But, as Mr. Boswell

has shrewdly pointed out, this did not suit the popular taste, and accordingly, in order to gratify it, some later writer, of a very different mental outlook from the author of the vision proper, added an appendix descriptive of Hell.

It is with this appendix (sections 21–29 in Boswell's translation) that we are here concerned, and reserve the vision itself for its proper place in a later chapter. We believe that this appendix consists, in the main, of a very old Irish vision, in its original form possibly not later than the tenth century. From this point it will be referred to under the symbol *Ad. II*, as it forms an appendix to the vision proper. But before the question of date can be discussed a summary of this vision must be given. To facilitate reference we give the sections as numbered by Boswell.

Sections 21-23. When they have visited Heaven the guardian angel brings the soul of Adamnán to the "nethermost Hell." First of all, they come to a fire-scorched land, empty of inhabitants or punishments. At the far side of this is a fiery glen in which are eight red-hot serpents. This glen is spanned by an enormous bridge. Across this the good souls go with perfect ease; those who had been constrained to do God's will, and afterwards turn their compulsion into willingness, find it narrow at first, but ever getting wider and wider; while the unrepentant sinners who essay the passage find it broad at first, but continually getting narrower, until at length they drop off and are devoured by the serpents.

Section 24. Next are seen vast multitudes, dwelling in utter darkness on the shore of eternal

pain. Every other hour the pain (*tide*—P.) ebbs away from them, and the next hour it returns and submerges them. These are they in whom the good and evil were equal, and at the Judgment their good shall quench their evil, and they shall be brought to the Harbour of Life.

Section 25. Hard by these, however, are many persons in a sea of fire up to their chins, and fettered to fiery pillars with chains of fire in the form of vipers. These were fratricides (or parricides), ravagers of the church, and Erenachs (managers of church-lands) who had alienated the money entrusted to them instead of giving it to the poor and needy.

Sections 26–27. There are others standing in black mire up to their waists, and wearing short cowls of ice. Their girdles are perpetually tormenting them with alternate heat and cold, while demons beat them on the head with fiery clubs. These all face the north, and a sharp bitter wind blows upon their foreheads, while showers of fire rain incessantly upon them. Others of these (apparently) have streams of fire in the hollows of their faces; others, again, have fiery nails (*swords*—P.) through their tongues or their heads. These are thieves, liars, robbers, raiders, false judges, women who dealt in poisons, and learned men who taught heresy.[1]

[1] In *The Blickling Homilies*, p. 60, is a description of the different classes of sinners in Hell, which resembles passages in *Ad. II*: "In Hell are thieves, chiders, covetous men who deprive men wrongfully of their property, proud men, magicians who practice enchantments and deceptions and deceive unwary men thereby, and wean them from the contemplation of God by means of their sleights and deceptions. There are also evil reeves (governors) who now give wrong judgments, and pervert the laws of just men."

Section 27. Another great multitude is set on islands in the fiery sea, but they are protected from its waves by a silver wall constructed by the raiment and alms which they had bestowed, and after the Judgment they shall be brought to the Harbour of Life. These are they which have practised mercy without zeal (*with negligence*—P.; *mercy without neglect, and yet abide in laxity and lust*—S.C.C.), and who remained in loose living until the hour of their death.

Section 28. Another throng of persons is clad in red fiery cloaks, with fiery chains (or wheels) round their necks. Demons urge hell-hounds to devour them. Every alternate hour they are raised up to the firmament, and the next hour they are dashed down into Hell's deep. (Little children are continually tearing them: on this point something will be said farther on.) Those thus punished are regulars who have transgressed their rules, and impostors who endeavoured to seduce the multitude by working pseudo-miracles. The children who are tearing the men in orders are those who were entrusted to them for instruction, but whom they neglected to teach.

Section 29. Another company is hunted across fiery flagstones by a host of demons who rain showers of red-hot arrows upon them. They continue their headlong flight until they reach a black lake and a black river, in which they hope to quench the arrows, but therein they only find an augmentation of their pain. Those so punished are dishonest artisans and traders, false judges, impious kings, evil Erenachs, adulterous women, and panders.

Section 29. Beyond the Land of Pains is a fiery wall, seven times more terrible than the land itself. However, souls do not dwell in it (*possess* it—Stokes) until Doomsday, but it is in the possession of demons only until then.

Section 30 is partly homiletic, partly descriptive. Woe to him who shall dwell in those pains along with the Devil's family, and over whom a savage demon is set as lord! Woe to him who shall listen to the spirits moaning and complaining to the Lord for the speedy coming of the Day of Judgment, that they may know whether they shall find any remission of their doom; for they get no respite ever, save only for three hours on every Sunday. (*Praying that He may send the Day of Judgment speedily on them, and that they may know if they will ever obtain any other rest except three hours on Sunday*—P.) Woe to him for whom that land shall be a lasting inheritance for ever and ever! Here follows a topographical description of that land; it contains, amongst other features, fiery flagstones, and four rivers of fire, snow, poison, and black water respectively, in which wallow hosts of demons.

In order to arrive at the question of date a comparison of this vision must be made with the vision of Laisrén (here designated by *L.*); and brief though the latter is, yet such a comparison produces some interesting results.

The soul of Laisrén is brought into Hell itself, whereas other visionaries are as a rule only permitted to gaze in; apparently the writer of *Ad. II* wishes to convey the impression that Adamnán's soul is

similarly favoured, but his language is vague. The glen and region which Laisrén enters first of all resemble the barren fire-scorched land (also containing a glen) which Adamnán visits before Hell itself is reached. In *L.* a sea of fire serves as the background for the groups of tormented souls. The same is true, at all events to a certain degree, of *Ad. II.* Explicit mention is made of a sea of fire, with islands in it in one case; while multitudes dwell on the "shore of pain," and get relief or torment from the ebb or flow of the (fiery) tide. The mention of the "Harbour of Life" to which two classes will ultimately be borne carries on the metaphor to a certain degree. In *L.* the souls have their heads above the sea of fire; the same conception is found in *Ad. II*, section 25. In both visions the torment of fiery nails through the tongue occurs, and is in each case a punishment for the misuse of the organ of speech. The souls urged on by demons armed with fiery forks in *L.* is paralleled in *Ad. II* by the souls whom the devils drive on before them with red-hot arrows. It might be said, too, that there is a literary flavour common to both documents.

These points of connection between the two visions give support to the theory of an earlier date for *Ad. II* than has hitherto been assigned to it. A stronger argument for this is found in its eschatology. The unknown writer who tacked it on, as a description of Hell, to the *Vision of Adamnán* did not possess critical faculties of the highest order. He has represented "Hell" as being a place where two classes of souls enjoy temporary respite (we

are not now alluding to the question of the Sabbath-rest in Hell, which is an entirely different matter) and will ultimately be saved, while from it many others hope to depart at Doom and go to Heaven. This is quite in accordance with the eschatology of the first period. But the writer has entirely overlooked the fact that at the date (tenth, or perhaps eleventh, century) at which he set himself to the task of adding on this appendix the views therein contained had become completely obsolete. By that date the eschatology of the Irish Church had undergone a radical change. Hell had then become the abode of the eternally lost, from which none could *ever* be freed ("The soul experiences the consummation of all evil, in the Devil's presence, throughout all ages"—*Vision of Adamnán*, section 20). The purgatorial qualities hitherto possessed by it have been definitely severed from it, and transferred to a distinct state, represented in *Adamnán* by the hills and marshes where the souls of sinners wander till Doom. Thus the eschatology of *Ad. II*, which ought, if anything, to be a later development of that found in the *Vision of Adamnán*, actually represents an earlier stage of belief, and one completely at variance with that document to which it is appended.

Thus from the parallels in style and subject between it and *L.*, and more especially from its eschatology, it may be stated, with a considerable degree of certainty, that *Ad. II* consists, in the main, of a vision which belongs to the earlier period of Irish eschatology, when Hell and Purgatory were not separated. Consequently, it is the largest

vision-fragment that has come down to us from that period ; and it may possibly be as old as *L.*

On analysing this vision it will be found that the language of it is vague and uncertain, as if the writer was not thinking clearly, while it is so constructed as to contain contradictory statements. To commence with, the bridge episode is introduced as a means of carrying over the souls to their allotted places in the Other-World. But the writer has completely forgotten that in the *Vision of Adamnán*, to which he intends this to be a supplement, the good have already reached Heaven, the fairly good and fairly bad (represented by his middle class) have also been disposed of, while the utterly bad have been cast into Hell for ever *viâ* twelve dragons. He makes, by means of his bridge, a *threefold* division of souls *immediately after death* (apparently the only instance known in printed Irish literature), whereas the *Vision of Adamnán* makes a *fourfold* division. Furthermore, the two classes who cross over safely are left to their own devices, and we learn nothing further about them ; while he does not tell us if the sinners who drop off remain where they are, or are ultimately conveyed to the definite series of torments which he describes. Also, in section 30, he says of all these souls in torment that " they get no respite ever, save only for three hours on Sunday," quite forgetting that he has already told us that one class receives twelve hours' ease in the twenty-four, while another class enjoys complete freedom from pain !

But these discrepancies and contradictions can be accounted for as follows :

As we have already suggested, the writer desired to furnish a description of Hell, and, in order to do so, took a vision belonging to the earlier period, and tacked it on to *Adamnán*. To this he saw fit to prefix a version of the widely spread bridge episode, interesting in itself, but quite inconsistent with what preceded and followed it. This, therefore, cannot have formed part of the original vision. The semi-homiletic, semi-topographical, piece at the end (section 30) also does not appear to have been in the original *Ad. II*. It is not found in that version of the *Vision of Adamnán* which is preserved in S.C.C., and it has just been pointed out that the conception of the Sabbath rest contradicts what has been said in the vision proper. Nevertheless, section 30 is old, and probably contemporary with *Ad. II*; this may be inferred from the statement that the souls hope for release at Doom, which is the eschatological teaching of the earlier period. Also the belief in the Sabbath rest, which came in from outside, appears to have been well established in the Irish Church by the end of the ninth century.

Some lesser points may now be considered. In *Ad. II* two classes do not suffer continuously, but enjoy a partial respite, i.e. those in whom the good and evil are equal, and those oni slands. It is distinctly stated that both classes will attain Heaven after Doom. We might compare with this an episode in an Anglo-Saxon vision, that seen by the monk of Wenlock in A.D. 717. Certain souls in bird form hang for a little on the edges of fiery pits, and then fall into the depths. This moment of

rest shows that at the Judgment they will be granted eternal rest ; these, however, are in the purgatorial state, for those in Hell will never receive pardon.

The belief in a Sabbath rest granted to the damned occurs elsewhere in Irish literature, e.g. in the *Cáin Domnaig*,[1] in the *Voyage of the Ui Corra*, and elsewhere. This conception is very far from being confined to Ireland, as it is found in apocryphal literature in the East and West, but it may have been introduced into Irish ecclesiastical writings through the medium of the later versions of the *Vision of Paul*, an apocryphon which was read in the monastic schools in Ireland.

When the writer has enumerated the different classes of torment in the " Land of Pain," he tells us that beyond it there is a wall of fire which is seven times more horrible than the Land of Pain itself ; " howbeit no soul dwells therein till Judgment, but it is the province of the demons only, until the Day of Judgment." For souls to be placed in a fiery wall seems a difficult process, and one would feel inclined to believe that some words must have dropped out, or that the writer misunderstood his original, were it not for a passage in the Greek text of the *Vision of Paul*, when such a form of punishment is actually described (" And I looked to another place where there was a brazen wall in flames, and within it men and women," etc.). In one of the Middle-English versions of *Paul* there appears an iron wall full of souls.[2]

[1] *Ériu*, vol. ii, p. 195.

[2] Ante-Nicene Library, vol. xvi, p. 487 ; E. J. Becker, *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of Mediæval Visions*, etc., p. 74.

But as our writer speaks a little farther on of a dreadful land, which he describes in section 30, it is possible that he conceived the fiery wall as bounding that grim country; in this case he would have misunderstood his original, for *Paul* describes the fiery wall as being a torment in itself, not as forming the bounds to any country.

Mention has already been made of a short description of Hell in a very curious and interesting Irish version of the *Transitus Mariae*, of which two texts are extant, one in the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*,[1] the other in a Bodleian Library manuscript.[2] The value of this version lies *inter alia* in the fact that it has incorporated considerable portions of a Syriac apocryphon entitled *The Obsequies of the Holy Virgin*.[3] But, according to the Irish version, when the body of Mary is taken up to Paradise, accompanied by the Apostles, the latter reminded Christ that He had promised to show them Hell. This is done accordingly, and a detailed description is given of the pains suffered by four classes of sinners. But as there is no such description in the Syriac text, in which it is merely said that the Apostles looked into the pit, it is very probable that the Irish writer has here incorporated a fragment of an Irish version, otherwise unknown. From the parallels from *L.* and *Ad. II*, it may be inferred that this vision-fragment also belongs to the older period

[1] A manuscript in the possession of the Royal Irish Academy. For its contents see E. J. Gwynn, *The Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* (P.R.I.A., vol. xxvi, sect. c, no. 2).

[2] Laud Misc. 610.

[3] See J.T.S., vol. xxiii, pp. 36 ff.

with which this chapter deals. We shall give the Bodleian text in full, with the variants from the *L.F.F.* text, and the parallels from *L.* and *Ad. II* after each section.[1]

In *Bodl.* the Apostles or Mary ask questions, and Jesus answers ; in *L.F.F.* Peter interrogates throughout, and Michael replies.

(1) " Thereupon Michael went along with them, and he showed them people with heavy fiery clods ablaze in their mouths so that they could not speak distinctly, while they moaned and suffered their pain. When Mary and the Apostles asked, ' What evil was done by the company that suffer those great pains ? ' Jesus answered, ' These were men of science and learning, persons acquainted with the divine Scriptures, famous teachers who did not themselves observe the divine and mystic precepts which they imparted to others.' "

In *L.F.F.* they have fiery darts in their mouths. There are no parallels to this section in *L.* and *Ad. II.*

(2) " At that moment they caught sight of another company close to the former ; their hands were on fire for all eternity, and they could not lift up their eyes to beg for help, and little children that grew out of their thighs kept eating them. The Apostles asked, ' What ill did yon company do ? ' ' They are the ignorant priests that do not understand the divine words and the canon of the Lord, and do not understand the terms of the (Act of) Contrition that should be prescribed for those that confess to them.' "

[1] For the translation of the Bodleian text I am indebted to Prof. J. Fraser, of Jesus College, Oxford.

In *L.F.F.* there are little infants in flames (hanging) out of their sides (?) (breasts ?) sucking at them. In *Ad. II* there is a remarkable parallel to this. In section 28, according to the L.U. text, the children that are tearing the men in orders are they who were committed to them for amendment, but they amended them not, neither reproved them for their sins. Something has dropped out, as nothing has been previously said with respect to the presence of the children. The *P.* text, however, inserts before the previous sentence in the following passage: "Children continually lacerate and gash them on all sides." One is reminded of certain passages in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, though in those it is the parents, not the clergy, whom the children torment. Conceptions similar to the last are found in the vision of William of Stranton and in that of Alberic of Monte Cassino.

(3) "Next they saw, near to those, people with fetters on their feet and hands; they blazed in red flames, and a demon dragged them along and scourged them. Mary asked, 'What evil did yon company do?' Christ answered, 'They were unbelieving seniors, with much of the world's goods, who never gave alms to the poor, and the naked, and the miserable, but spent their wealth on harlots and drink.'"

Much the same is found in *L.F.F.*, but a couple of lines of the manuscript are almost illegible. In *Ad. II*, section 25, amongst those fettered to fiery columns by red-hot chains are the Erenachs, who had alienated tithes and oblations to themselves instead of giving them to the poor and needy.

(4) "Then they saw other persons with flaming red swords driven through their tongues. Mary said, 'What evil did these people do?' Jesus replied, 'These are the Judges of the world who give a twist to their judgments, and do not deliver them in their integrity.'"

According to *L.F.F.* they pervert the truth for money or rank. In *Ad. II*, section 27, "Judges of false judgment" are amongst those who have fiery nails (*swords*—P.) driven through their tongues. In *L.* persons who have misused their tongues have them pierced by fiery nails.

There is a complete, though very short, vision contained in the *Voyage of the Ui Çorra*. The three brothers go to their grandfather, the Erenach of Clogher, with the intention of murdering him and of burning his church. But the night before they carry out their purpose Lochan, the eldest of the three, has a vision of the Other-World by which he is, very properly, turned from his evil designs.

He was first taken to Hell, where he saw countless numbers of souls in torment. He beheld there, too, the four rivers of Hell, that is to say, a river of toads, a river of serpents, a river of fire, and a river of snow. There was also to be seen there a monstrous serpent with many heads and legs, a single glance at which would be sufficient to make all the men in the world drop dead with horror and loathing.

After that he was taken to Heaven, and saw the Almighty seated on His kingly throne, and angels in the form of white birds singing before Him. Amongst them was one white bird of dazzling brightness, which excelled all the others in size,

beauty, and vocal power; this was Michael the Archangel.

It seems probable that this vision must be assigned to the first period, for the external evidence, slight though it is, demands such. The conception of four infernal rivers is found, under somewhat different form, in section 30 of *Ad. II*, which, though not forming part of the original vision, yet is of early date. In a story related of St. Brendan, which is also possibly of early date, Michael appears in the form of a radiant bird.[1] Angels, though fallen ones, in bird form are found in one of the visions of the Brendan-legend. The allusion to the great many-limbed monster in Hell is apparently the first in Irish ecclesiastical literature; we shall see in due course how the idea was developed in a later vision.

This concludes the list of visions, entire or fragmentary, which belong, with certainty or with conjecture, to the earlier period. But, before putting forward any definite statement regarding the eschatological beliefs of that period, certain tales and ecclesiastical writings must be examined. To this, portion of the next chapter must be devoted.

[1] Stokes, *Lives of SS. from Book of Lismore*, p. xiv.

Chapter II

IRISH AND ANGLO-SAXON ESCHATOLOGY

The Monastery of Tallaght. The Lismore *Lives.* The Senior and the Black Soul. St. Brendan. Release from Hell. The Fire of Doom. The Vision of Drithelm. The Vision of the Monk of Wenlock. The Venerable Bede. Aelfric's *Homilies. The Blickling Homilies.* Other Anglo-Saxon Homilies and Sermons. The Effects of the Fire of Doom. Difference between the Eschatological Systems of the two Churches. Eschatology of the Celtic Church in England. Were the Irish views derived from the Eastern Church ? Rabbi Akiba and the Lost Soul.

THIS chapter will be devoted to a study of the eschatological beliefs of the first period, with special reference to purgatorial teaching. Irish documents must be examined first of all, and then, for purposes of comparison and contrast, Anglo-Saxon writings. Much helpful information can be derived from that valuable Old-Irish piece entitled *The Monastery of Tallaght*, which, fortunately, can be dated between 831 and 840. It is therein stated that vigils, abstinence, recitation of prayers, almsgiving, and the like are beneficial to the dead, and that Moedoc and his monks fasted a full year on bread and water to obtain the release of the soul of Brandub Mac Echach, King of Leinster. Maeldithruib lived on bread and water every Lent for the good of his father's soul. In these extracts no information is given as to the state in which these souls were located, and from which they could be freed ; but another passage in the same document makes it clear that it is Hell, not Purgatory in the modern sense of the word, which is meant.

A certain layman living under "spiritual guidance" was murdered. Dublitir ordered that one of his sons should offer himself body and soul to God, and do penance for seven years on behalf of his father's soul, performing, in fact, the austerities that the father would have performed had he lived. That night seven years the dead man appeared to Dublitir, "and . . . was his comeliness, and he had glistening raiment about him." He gave Dublitir a blessing for the help that had been given to him, and added: "In this night the Lord hath taken pity on me, and hath brought me out of Hell (*de inferno*) to the kingdom of Heaven."[1]

That the Irish Church during the first period believed in the possibility of bringing souls out of Hell, which was also, as can be proved from many sources, the abode of the eternally lost, is clearly shown by passages in the lives of the Saints, both in Irish and in Latin. From those contained in the Book of Lismore much information can be gleaned; these in their present form are not earlier than the twelfth century, and possibly even later, but they contain material which the eschatology alone would prove to be of a much earlier date.

In one life it is related that King Dermot put his son Bresal to death for having forcibly taken a cow from a nun. Repenting of the deed, he desired to have his son restored to life. Thereupon St. Becan

[1] Gwynn and Purton, *The Monastery of Tallaght*, pp. 133, 163. For the story of the grass not growing on Brandub's grave until he had obtained mercy see De Smedt and De Backer, *Acta SS. e Cod. Salmanticensi*, col. 438. See further a story of Brandub's vision in the footnote to page 133.

raised his right hand and thrice made prayer to resuscitate Bresal, and at each prayer he brought fifty Bresals out of Hell (*hithfern*) ; and at the third prayer Bresal son of Dermot came with the last batch of them. St. Patrick was granted the right to bring seven of the men of Ireland every Saturday from torment to Heaven.[1] A young man, named Cluain, told a lie to St. Ciaran of Clonmacnois, and died forthwith. Ciaran brought him to life again, whereupon he declared that he was "thankful to come from the many pains of Hell" (*ithfrinn*). An evildoer, Failge Berraide, tried to murder St. Patrick ; not long afterwards he died, and his soul went to Hell (*ithfirn*). Similarly, a king who opposed St. Senan was flung out of his chariot and killed ; and his soul went direct through the saint's curse to Hell (*ithfrinn*). It will be noticed that in *each* case the word used is *iffern* (as correctly spelt), a loan from the Latin *infernum*.[2]

In another story it is related that on a Sunday a certain holy senior saw a man as black as a smith's coal come into his house. "Who are you ?" he asked. "This is Sunday," the other replied, "and I am not tortured on it, nor am I prevented from going where I wish. But pray to the Lord to part me from Hell (*re hiffern*), so that I may reach the heavenly reward." The senior accordingly prayed for him till the end of twenty days. Every Sunday the soul used to come and hold converse with the

[1] A like privilege was granted to St. Maedoc and to St. Coemgen (Plummer, *Irish Lives of SS.*, vol. ii, pp. 124, 216).

[2] Whitley Stokes, *Lives of SS. from Book of Lismore*, pp. xxviii, 161, 166, 217, 271.

senior, and each time he appeared he was whiter and whiter, till on the third Sunday he gave thanks for being parted from Hell, and for being pure white. He then departed with the brightness of the sun with the angels.[1]

The following is found in the Irish *Life* of St. Brendan the Navigator. One day a monk asked another in the presence of that saint the question, "Can the soul of a sinner be rescued from Hell (*hifurn*) by the prayers and almsdeeds of his surviving friends?" Thereupon Brendan related a story to them. He said that once when they were in mid-ocean they saw a menacing black cloud approaching them. When it drew near they perceived in it the form of a man, black as a cinder, weeping and howling, who besought them to pray for him for three days. This they did, and at the end of the three days he returned in a bluish-black body, while his lamentations were less. He requested them to pray for another three days; and at the end of that time he returned with a white cloud, from which issued strains of music about him, and his body all radiant like the summer sun. He gave thanks to God, and told them he was going to Heaven. "So it is clear from this," added Brendan, "that it does profit the dead for their surviving friends to sing their requiem."

In the corresponding passage in the Latin *Life* no indication is given as to the locality in which that soul was placed. Brendan was subsequently bidden by Michael the Archangel to make a collected prayer out of the Holy Scripture; and so great was

[1] C.Z., vol. iii, pp. 33–4.

the efficacy of this prayer that when it was recited twelve times in the day for the soul of a sinner, with twelve genuflexions after each recitation, and a *Pater Noster* on the completion of each course, it was said that " there is no sin so great, whether of living or dead, but shall receive remission, if only this be done for him." [1]

Under the head of saints being able to extort terms from the Almighty comes an extraordinary story from the Brussels *Life* of St. Ciaran of Saigir. A monk of his had committed homicide, and he (Ciaran) obtained the release of his soul from Hell (*hifurn*), saying that he would take the monk's place in Hell if he were not released to him; and he *was* released! [2] A curious parallel to this occurs in E. A. W. Budge's *Paradise of the Holy Fathers*,[3] where an Egyptian monk, Paul the Simple, takes his stand on a stone in the fierce noonday heat, and cries to Christ that he will not descend from it, nor eat and drink, until He casts out the devil from a certain man; and immediately it was done.

The recitation of psalms and prayers is able to procure the release of souls. The *Beatus*, Psalm cxix (cxviii in Vulgate), was considered especially efficacious in this respect. Thus in the story of the two clerical students, which may belong to the ninth century, the dead man appears and tells his friend, " Say the *Beatus* every day for my soul, for the mightiest ladder and collar and chain to bring a man's soul out of Hell (*iffern*) is the *Beatus*." Also

[1] Plummer, *Irish Lives of SS.*, vol. ii, pp. 88–9; see his *Vitæ SS. Hib.*, vol. i, p. 48.

[2] *Irish Lives of SS.*, vol. ii, p. 118.

[3] Vol. i, p. 128.

in the story of the nun and the clerical student the soul of the former is released by a daily recitation seven times of the *Beati* (the Beatitudes) and of the entire Psalter, with a hundred and fifty genuflexions.[1]

In *The Monastery of Tallaght* (pp. 162-3) it is said that " the lifting up of the gospel " assists the souls of those towards whom it is lifted up. Adamnán lifted it up in connection with a dispute about the abbacy at Clonmacnois, and when wonder was expressed at the quickness with which its effects were produced he answered, " Wonder not that the sign of the Cross by the power of the Gospel traverses quicker than a wink of the eye all the elements up to Heaven. With like speed doth it reach the pit of torment."

From the foregoing passages it is possible to reconstruct the belief with respect to Hell, and the possibility of release therefrom, held by the Irish Church in the first period with which this book deals, that is, down to the tenth, or, perhaps, the eleventh century.

It was the abode of the eternally lost, but not exclusively so, as from it souls could be released under certain conditions. Sometimes this release took place instantaneously, or almost so, at the prayer or will of a saint (cf. St. Becan and the Bresals). At other times the process was slower, and varied from a few days (cf. St. Brendan ; the holy senior) to several years (cf. Dublitir and the laymen). As Hell was evidently conceived of as possessing purgatorial qualities, the varying lengths

[1] *Lives of SS. from Book of Lismore*, pp. x–xii ; *Miscellany presented to Kuno Meyer*, pp. 208–14.

of time must be supposed to be proportionate to the amount of guilt incurred by each soul, and which had to be purged away. Some souls, however, were compelled to remain in Hell without release until the Day of Judgment, no doubt because their sins demanded that degree of purgation, after which they would be brought to Heaven.

This is proved by certain passages. In the L. Breac preface to the hymn *Altus Prosator* it is stated that many graces are attached to its repetition, one of which is that he who repeats it frequently will not be in Hell (*in inferno*) after the Day of Judgment, even though he shall have done much evil. In the *Poem of the Fifty Questions* it is asked, "What joy is there in Hell?" (*iffern*) and the answer is, "The souls who expect a heavenly reward (*fochraic*) after the Judgment." In the semi-homiletic piece at the end of *Ad. II*, it is said that the souls are longing for Judgment in order to know if they shall find any remission of the Doom. On the other hand, St. Patrick says of Miliuc that his soul will not come out of Hell either before or after the Judgment.[1]

The Irish Church at this period also believed in the Fire of Doom, that terrible conflagration which would envelop the entire world and all things on it at the Last Day. Following the teaching of some of the earlier Latin Fathers this Fire was invested with purgatorial qualities, though with respect to this belief during the first period not much information is available.

[1] *Irish Liber Hymnorum*, vol. ii, p. 25; *Lives of SS. from Book of Lismore*, p. 157; *Poem of the Fifty Questions* in C.Z., vol. iv, pp. 234–5. I owe this last reference to Miss Mary E. Byrne.

In an Old-Irish metrical Rule, which is not later than A.D. 800, occur the following passages. "Repentance with sluggishness (?) after being in great sin, small is its reward in Heaven, its trial in fire will be great . . . three hundred prostrations every day, and three at the canonical hours, thy soul will not be at the Judgment of the King on the Day of Doom." Here the "Fire" must be understood as the cleansing Fire of Doom, as the following extract will show. In *The Monastery of Tallaght* Dublitir extols his monks at the expense of those of Maelruain. The latter retorts: "Any of my monks that shall hearken to me, and keep my Rule, shall not need to be cleansed by the Fire of Doomsday, nor to come to Judgment, because they shall be clean already. Thy monks, however, shall perchance have somewhat for the Fire of Doom to cleanse." [1]

In the Lismore *Life* of St. Brendan it is said that as Noah lifted up the ark over the waves so he will raise up his monks and his household on high over the Fire of Doom, so that neither smoke nor mist nor spark shall hurt them. Similarly, it was granted to St. Coemgen that at Doom his people would not be decreed to imprisonment, i.e. enveloped in the Fire of Doom, but would be like mist on the top of twigs. In a religious poem, possibly of the tenth century, to which the editor, Kuno Meyer, has given the fitting title *On the Flightiness of Thought*, the poet says: "Shame to my thoughts how they stray from me! I dread great danger from it on the day of lasting Doom," which evidently means that he fears that because of his wandering

[1] *Ériu*, vol. i, pp. 196, 200; *The Monastery of Tallaght*, p. 130.

thoughts he must endure prolonged cleansing in the Fire of Doom.[1]

Thus the Fire was conceived of as having no effect at all on the perfectly good, while it would purge away the small defilements that clung to those who were not quite perfect. It is not said what effect it would have on the damned. Perhaps with Bede, the Irish Church at this period conjectured that it would have no effect at all, either good or bad. Or possibly it may have conceived that it would punish them severely, but not cleanse them, and this may be the meaning of the lines in the hymn *Altus Prosator*:

> The raging fury of fire shall consume the adversaries
> Unwilling to believe that Christ came from God the Father;
> But we shall forthwith fly up to meet him."[2]

If the *Poem on the Day of Judgment* is as early as the tenth century, it will bear out this view, for it is stated therein that "one blaze will fill both Heaven and Earth," and that the sinners will be cast into Hell "after being for a long space of time in the scorching Fire of Doom." It may be just noted here that in the later period the conception of purgatorial qualities is quite dropped; the Fire does not affect any except the damned, for whom it serves as a foretaste of Hell.[3]

By way of comparison and contrast something must be said regarding the eschatological views

[1] *Lives of SS. from Book of Lismore*, p. 247; Plummer, *Irish Lives*, vol. ii, p. 138; *Ériu*, vol. iii, p. 13.

[2] *Irish Liber Hymnorum*, vol. ii, p. 152.

[3] *Ériu*, vol. iii, p. 129.

held by the Anglo-Saxon Church. This subject, on which a detailed study by an expert scholar is much needed, can only be touched on briefly here. The authorities drawn upon will cover the entire period dealt with in this book, and this is rendered possible by the fact that no such sharp break occurs in the Anglo-Saxon eschatology as in the Irish.

According to Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics the man who died in grievous sins went straight to Hell, and from it nothing could avail to release him. This is the view found in the two earliest visions, that of Drithelm, and of the monk of Wenlock, in Bede, in Aelfric, in *The Blickling Homilies*, and elsewhere.

As a natural consequence the belief in a purgatory as a distinct and separate state makes a definite appearance at an early date. The earliest example of this is found in the Vision of Drithelm (on which more will be said elsewhere), which may be dated about 696. In it the Unseen World is divided into four regions—the first instance in Christian literature of this clear-cut fourfold division. The first region consists of a valley where souls are tormented by alternate heat and cold. These are they who only repented at the point of death, and who will ultimately be received into Heaven at the Day of Judgment; but many can be received before that day by the prayers, alms, and fasting of the living, and specially by the Mass. Hell is the next region, from which those who enter therein shall never be delivered to all eternity. After this comes Paradise, then Heaven.[1]

[1] Bede, H.E., book v, chap. xii; Aelfric's *Homilies*, vol. ii, pp. 349 ff.

In the Vision of the Monk of Wenlock (*circa* 717) a fourfold division is also made. The visionary saw pits belching forth flame, on the edges of which human souls, in the shape of birds, hung for a little, and then fell into the depths. This brief respite showed that on the Day of Judgment these would obtain eternal rest. Nothing is said about any means for procuring their release before that day. The momentary ease afforded to these reminds us of two classes of sinners in *Ad. II*, while the conception of souls in bird form finds parallels in Irish ecclesiastical literature. Beyond this was Hell, from which there was no release. After this the monk was shown Paradise. Then he beheld a river of fiery pitch, spanned by a bridge, across which the holy souls were hastening. Some crossed with certain step, while others fell off into the river and were immersed, it might be to the waist or to the knees, or merely to the ankles. But each of them climbed out of the river more beautiful than he had been before he fell in, and then hastened on to Heaven.[1]

The Venerable Bede, who has preserved for us the story of Drithelm, says in his Homily XLIX that those who are destined for eternal life, but who have certain sins when they die, will after death be severely punished by the flame of the purgatorial fire (*ignis purgatorii*). Therein they will remain until the Judgment, unless they are released before that day by the prayers, almsgiving, and abstinence of the faithful, or by the sacrifice of the Mass. But, commenting on 1 Cor. iii. 12–15, and using the

[1] Kylie, *English Correspondence of St. Boniface*, pp. 78 ff.

words of Pope Gregory the Great, he warns his hearers that it is only the lighter sins (wood, hay, stubble) that the fire can cleanse away, not the grosser ones ; and that no man can be cleansed even from those unless he has merited such by his good deeds in his life.[1]

Aelfric, in his *Homilies*, which were written between 990 and 995, also puts forward the theory of a Purgatory in the intermediary state, and in one passage couples it with the belief in the efficacy of the prayers of the saints. " We in this life may help the departed that are in torment. And those who were perfect, and have attained to the Kingdom of God, may aid both us and the departed that are in torment, if they [the latter] are not totally condemned." Commenting on the passage *Forgive us our trespasses*, he says that if we do not forgive men who anger us then God will not forgive us, but " He will command you to be bound and set in prison, that is, in Hell-torment ; and then the Devil will torture you until ye come to one farthing " (cf. Matt. v. 26). Here one might imagine that he was drawing no hard-and-fast distinction between Hell and Purgatory, were it not for the fact that he says elsewhere : " There are many penal places where the souls of men suffer for their heedlessness, according to the degree of their sins, before the universal doom, so that some will be fully cleansed, and not suffer aught in the Fire of Doom." He also quotes the story, given by Bede, of the man who was taken captive in war, but whose bonds were burst again and again by the prayers which his brother, a

[1] Bede's *Works* (Ed. Giles) vol. v, p. 381, x, p. 349.

mass-priest, thinking him to be dead, said for his soul. Thereupon the prisoner said to his captors: "If I were now in the other-world then were my soul released from torment through the holy Masses." [1]

In *The Blickling Homilies*, which were written about 971, is related the story of the rich man and his kinsman. The latter had been absent for many years, and on his return found that his rich relation had died during his absence. When he visited the tomb the bones of the deceased spoke to him, and reminded him that he would be as they were. Thereupon the kinsman "began to learn and to teach the praise of God, and to love spiritual virtues, and thereby earned for himself the grace of the Holy Spirit; and he delivered also the other's soul from punishment, and released him from torments." In view of what has already been written it is clear that the word "torments" in this and the preceding story refer to a distinct purgatorial state, not to a Hell-Purgatory.[2]

In an Anglo-Saxon sermon of about 1009 the purgatorial doctrine is clearly insisted on, and a threefold division of souls made after death. "Some men's souls go to rest after their departure; some go to punishment, and are afterwards released through almsdeeds, and especially through the Mass; and some are condemned with the Devil to Hell." No intercession avails for these, but lighter sins are punished in the "penal fire," where sinners

[1] Aelfric's *Homilies*, vol. i, p. 267; vol. ii, pp. 357, 359, 591. A longer version of the story of the captive is in Bede, H.E., book iv, chap. xxii.

[2] *The Blickling Homilies* (E.E.T.S.), p. 112.

remain a longer or shorter time, according to their deserts, though prayers and Masses can help them.[1]

In a twelfth-century homily it is said that when a good man dies, if he has aught unwashen, it shall be washen in the death-pain he suffers, or after (death) with a slight delay, and then he is led to bliss, though that is not perfect until he shall receive his body again at Doom. In another homily we read that there are three deaths. The first is the separation of the soul from the body; the second is sometimes long, which the soul undergoes when the body sins and separates itself from righteousness; while the third is eternal, and is shared by soul and body together.[2]

It will be observed from the foregoing quotations that in Anglo-Saxon eschatology two distinct classifications are made of the division of souls *immediately after death*, and of the abodes to which they go. A *fourfold* division is found in *Drithelm*, this being, as we have said, the first instance of the bird in Christian vision literature. It also occurs in the Vision of the Monk of Wenlock. This method of division is not alluded to by the Homilists, so far as they are available, though it is certainly implied in the writings of Aelfric. He says that grievous sinners after death go to Hell, and the righteous to Heaven; the pure soul after death awaits the resurrection, but continues in the interval in glory with the saints; while for the souls of those who have lightly sinned there are many penal

[1] Soames, *Doctrine of Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 360.

[2] Morris, *Old-English Homilies*, 1st series, p. 238; 2nd series, p. 168.

places.[1] The first appearance of the fourfold division in Irish eschatology, of which much will be said elsewhere, occurs a good deal later than in Anglo-Saxon. On the other hand, the sermon quoted by Soames makes a *threefold* division *immediately after death*. This method of division appears to be foreign to Irish eschatology, the only known instance of it being the bridge episode at the commencement of *Ad. II*.

Thus it can be seen that from at least the end of the seventh century the Anglo-Saxon Church consistently held the belief in a distinct purgatorial state in the Unseen World. Bede and Alcuin seem to be the only writers who use the expression *ignis purgatorius*, while the Homilists writing in Anglo-Saxon do not employ any word corresponding to "Purgatory," but content themselves with such expressions as "torments," "penal places," "punishment," or else use a periphrasis. This belief was mainly derived from the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great (540–604), in which the doctrine of a Purgatory in the intermediate state received great prominence.

But at the same time the Anglo-Saxon Church held the belief that the Fire of Doom had purgatorial efficacy. This was pre-Gregorian, and was derived from some of the earlier Latin Fathers. On this subject, which occupies such a prominent place in Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical writings, as well as in the poetry, something must be said.

According to a homily quoted by Soames *all* men must pass through the Fire of Doom. With this agrees a twelfth-century homily, which makes a twofold division of the human race at the Doom,

[1] Aelfric's *Homilies*, vol. i, p. 219; vol. ii, pp. 233, 591–2.

and says then that all believing men shall be cleansed by the Fire from their sins. C. F. Browne shows that this was the view of Hilary and Ambrose. On the other hand, Aelfric clearly held that the righteous would not suffer at all, but that only those who were uncleansed should "eat the fire's breath."

Commencing elsewhere on that much-commented-on passage, 1 Cor. iii. 12–15, he makes a threefold division at Doom. Those who have good works (gold, silver, precious stones) will suffer no torment in the Fire, but will go through it to Christ as if they went through sunbeams. But the man who built upon that foundation such things as "trees, or straw, or chaff," will have his work burnt, but will be saved by the Fire. But he who commits the deadly sins, and ends in them, will burn in the everlasting Fire, and yet never have his sins purged away. Alcuin holds the same view. The fire in 1 Cor. iii. is the purgatorial fire (*de igne purgatorio hoc Apostolum dixisse non est dubitandum*). The saints will be unharmed by it, as were the Three Children in the burning fiery furnace—a favourite illustration with writers on the subject. The just, who have committed some small sins, will be purged by it, and then enter Heaven. But the grievous sinners will be tormented by it, and then cast into Hell.[1]

[1] Soames, p. 351; Kennedy, *Cynewulf's Poems*, p. 128; Morris, *Old-English Homilies*, 2nd series, p. 170; C. F. Browne, *Cynewulf and Alcuin*, pp. 312, 313, 315; Aelfric's *Homilies*, vol. i, p. 617; vol. ii, p. 591; Alcuin in Migne, P.L., vol. ci, col. 53. According to the fourteenth-century poem *Cursor Mundi* (Ed. Morris, E.E.F.S., part IV, p. 1317), those who die in slight sins will be punished by the terror of seeing devils led to judgment—which otherwise one would imagine to be a pleasing spectacle!

All writers are agreed that the Fire of Doom has no purgative effect on the wholly reprobate, but that it is merely a preliminary torment for them before their eternal doom comes upon them. According to the twelfth-century homily quoted above they shall become so black and terrible in it that they shall be a hundredfold more horrible than any night-darkness. Bede, however, in his *De Temporum Ratione*,[1] queries if the Fire of Doom shall have any effect at all on those whom it is not intended to cleanse, seeing that they are destined for the eternal fire.

Almost all hold the view, which indeed appears to be the obvious one, that the purgatorial cleansing will take place *before* the Last Judgment. But in Cynewulf's poem *Elene* the order is inverted. The Judgment comes first. Then humanity is divided into three parts, and put into the flame. The two uppermost classes, after fiery purgation, enter Heaven, but the wicked, those in the lowest place, are cast out of the flame into the pit of Hell. The post-Judgment purgation is also found in *Phœnix*. Browne points out that this arrangement is derived from the earlier Latin Fathers. He quotes a sentence to that effect from the *Divine Institutes* of Lactantius, "Sed et justos cum *judicaverit*, etiam in igni eos *examinabit*," and draws particular attention to the tenses employed.[2]

But besides purging away the sins of those destined for Heaven the Fire of Doom would also cleanse the material world. A homily quoted by

[1] Migne, P.L., vol. xc, col. 576.

[2] *Cynewulf's Poems*, pp. 127–8, 327–8; C. F. Browne, p. 329.

Soames says that "Heaven and Earth will pass away, and yet will continue, because they will be cleansed, by fire, from the hue which they now have." This conception is powerfully elaborated in Cynewulf's *Christ* and in *Phœnix*, but need not detain us here.

It is clear from what has been already said that there was a certain amount of inconsistency in Anglo-Saxon eschatology. Writers on the subject held the belief in a Purgatory in the intermediate state, in which venial sins would be purged away. Simultaneously they believed in the purgatorial efficacy of the Fire of Doom. It, too, would burn away the lighter sins of humanity—though that had been already accomplished in the intermediate state! Here, then, are two irreconcilable views, though no doubt, as often happens at the present day, such theological inconsistencies did not trouble thinkers over much. Aelfric, however, seems to have felt the difficulty, and to have tried to get over it. In a passage already quoted,[1] he says that in the "penal places" men suffer for their heedlessness, before the universal doom, so that *some* will be *fully* cleansed, and so need not suffer anything in the Fire of Doom. In another passage,[2] he says that the Fire will not merely raise the dead, but that it will kill all the living, and immediately after restore them to life. It will not injure the righteous who have been already cleansed. Accordingly the following seems to represent his views. In the intermediate state some (not all) would be fully cleansed in the "penal places." On the other

[1] Vol. i, pp. 591-2. [2] Vol. i, p. 617.

hand, those who will be alive at the coming of Doom, and who will then be slain by the Fire, will have had no opportunity of passing through a Purgatory in the intermediate State. These last will be purged by the Fire of Doom, as well as those who have been in the " penal places," but who have not been *fully* cleansed therein.

To sum up, the difference between the two eschatological systems was briefly this. The Anglo-Saxon Church held continuously, as appears from the authorities quoted, that from Hell there could be no deliverance at any time, but that there was a Purgatory in the intermediate state. The Irish Church, in its first period, drew no such hard-and-fast distinction between Hell and Purgatory, but invested the former region with purgatorial qualities, and admitted that from it souls could be freed. Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxon Church attributed purgatorial efficacy to the Fire of Doom, despite the inconsistency which this implied. The Irish Church held the same view in its first period, as appears from the scanty evidence; but we shall see that when it developed the belief in a distinct purgatorial state it, more logically, divested the Fire of Doom of its quality of purgation.

Why was it that the two Churches adopted such different viewpoints with respect to the purgatorial state? The answer appears to be that in this respect the Anglo-Saxon Church had its views formed for it by Augustine and his successors. That saint landed in England in 596 at the head of the Roman Mission. He had been sent thither by Pope

Gregory the Great, whose decided views on Purgatory had been embodied in his *Dialogues*, and it is only natural to expect that Augustine would promulgate the opinions put forward by his master and friend. On the other hand, the Irish Church had been evangelised at an earlier date, and was not directly affected by Augustine's mission. Nevertheless, the new viewpoint was subsequently found there too, but it came in later as a result of the gradual infiltration of newer ideas, this process culminating in the reformation brought about by St. Malachy of Armagh.

It seems possible to throw some light on the obscure question of the eschatology of the Celtic Church in England at this point. No doubt the first missionaries from Ireland taught eschatology as part of their gospel. The Synod of Whitby, (664) is supposed to have brought about a change in the Celtic Church in England in only two respects, viz. the keeping of Easter, and the imposition of the tonsure, according to the Roman method. It may be suggested, however, that as a result of that Synod, and of the teaching of the Roman ecclesiastics and their Celtic supporters, a change took place in its eschatology also. Bede quotes with evident approval the Vision of Drithelm, in which Purgatory appears as a distinct state. This is not a matter of wonder, for such a view was held by Bede himself and his Church.

In the Vision of the Monk of Wenlock there is also a fourfold division of the Other-World, Purgatory being one of the abodes. But Drithelm was a Northumbrian, living in a kingdom where the Celtic

Church was very strongly entrenched.[1] Furthermore, Wenlock was a Celtic foundation. May it not be therefore that in these two visions we have preserved for us specimens of the eschatology of the English *Celtic* Church at about the end of the seventh century, an eschatology which was now in full agreement with that of the Anglo-Saxon Church, as a result of the influence of the Roman mission, though presumably it originally differed from it, and resembled that of Ireland. If this be so, it would appear that that belief in a division of the Other-World into Purgatory, Hell, Paradise, and Heaven, a belief that, be it orthodox or not, still influences the minds of men, was first formally put forward by the Celtic Church in England.

From whence came this curious blending of Hell and Purgatory as found in the Irish Church down to about the tenth century? It was apparently derived from the East. For the theory formulated by the Irish Church is that held by the Greek Church at the present day. According to its view the soul in Hell cannot repent of itself, or do anything to free itself, but must depend on what the living do for it. In an Orthodox Confession of that Church, quoted by Nilles, the Roman doctrine of Purgatory is rejected, and the following stated dogmatically: "Assuredly many sinners are released from the bonds of Hell (*a vinculis inferni*), not on account of their own penitence or confession, but through the good works of the living and the prayers offered for them by the Church, and especially through the

[1] On this subject see J. L. G. Meissner, *The Celtic Church in England* (London, 1929).

Unbloody Sacrifice which the Church daily offers for all, both living and dead, as Christ equally died for all."[1]

This view is found in older Eastern writers. St. John Chrysostom taught that by almsgiving and prayer some relief might be procured for the departed who have died without baptism, or who have been condemned by God. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, when speaking of the liturgical *memento* of the dead, mentions the objection that it is useless to pray for those who have died in a state of sin, and answers that the priest offers up to God Christ immolated, even for those of the departed who have been sinners. Nicephorus Callistus (*floruit* 1320–30) in his *Triodium* puts forward the view that the lost were refreshed by the prayers of the faithful, and even released from punishment; and relates the story of the unbeliever's skull telling St. Macarius that his prayers for the dead brought great refreshment to the lost. According to an apocryphon of the Coptic Church, *The Vision of St. John the Evangelist*, St. Michael the Archangel goes once a year to the abyss of Hell, plunges his right wing thrice therein, and withdraws on it each time a vast number of sinful souls, who are then bathed by the angels and introduced into Heaven.[2]

In conclusion, it might be noted that views akin

[1] Gavin, *Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought* (Hale Lectures, 1922), p. 408; Nilles, *Calendarium Manuale Utriusque Ecclesiae* (Oeniponte, 1897), vol. ii, p. 322.

[2] Tixeront, *History of Dogmas* (St. Louis, 1914), vol. ii, p. 198; Nilles, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 22; Amélineau, *Contes et Romans de l'Égypte Chrétienne* (Paris, 1888), vol. i, pp. 11 ff.

to the above were found in Jewish writings. Gehinnom was looked upon as having purgatorial qualities, and from it the wicked could be released. A story is told of the celebrated Rabbi Akiba, which might well have come out of the life of some Irish saint, and which to a certain degree resembles an episode in the *Voyage of the Ui Corra*. One day Akiba was walking in a churchyard when he met a man, with his face as black as a coal, running with a load of wood upon his shoulders. On interrogating him, the Rabbi found that he was a damned soul who had to cut each day the wood which made the fire in which he was burnt. Akiba asked him if he had any hope, and he replied that if his wife had borne a son, and if the latter would stand up in the congregation and cry, "Bless ye the Lord who is blessed for ever and ever," he would be released from torment. After further questioning Akiba made his way to the man's city. There he found that his memory, and that of his wife, was execrated. But the son was alive, and uncircumcised. So Akiba took him, circumcised him, and after forty days brought him into the congregation, and caused him to cry "Bless ye," etc. And in that hour his father was released from torment.[1]

[1] J. Mew, *Traditional Aspects of Hell*, pp. 188–203; M. Gaster, *Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise* (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for July 1893), pp. 571 ff.

Chapter III

THE IMRAMA

The Voyage of Bran. The Adventures of Connla the Fair. The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn. The Adventures of Art, Son of Conn. The Voyage of Maelduin. The Voyage of the Ui Corra. The Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla. The Voyage of St. Columba's Clerics. The Voyage of St. Brendan. The Judas Episode. Conclusions.

AMONGST the tales in which the ancient Irish delighted, the *Voyage Imaginaire* held a prominent place. In the Book of Leinster is given a long list of the tales which the *file* or poet should know, and which he should be ready to relate on demand to kings and chieftains; these are classified according to subject, one group consisting of *Imrama* or Navigations. Eight items are comprised under this heading, of which the first two only, the *Voyage of Maelduin* and the *Voyage of the Ui Corra*, have come down to us in fairly complete form. There are other voyage-tales, however, which have been preserved, but which do not occur in the list in the Book of Leinster.

It might be noted that in the list of eight tales alluded to above, the first three items are each described as being an *Imram*, while to the remaining five the term *Longes* is applied. According to O'Curry [1] the latter term indicated a voyage involuntarily undertaken, as for instance in the case of a banishment or a flight; while the former was a voluntary expedition by sea. It was not, however,

[1] O'Curry, *Manuscript Materials*, pp.252, 288, 583, 587.

a voyage in the ordinary sense of the word, but implied a journey into the invisible world, or in search of a terrestrial Paradise, in the course of which the adventurous voyager had many strange and non-human experiences.

There are also kindred tales, known as *Echtrai* or adventures, some of which must be taken into consideration. It is remarkable that the *Voyage of St. Columba's Clerics* is styled an *Echtra*, though, as it was undertaken on the sea, one would have expected it to have been called an *Imram*. But, as will be shown hereafter, the *Echtra* contained many features which allied it to the *Imram*.

The *Imram* was constructed with a very elastic framework, into which any number of incident could be fitted until the whole piece might be stretched out to an interminable and wearisome length, as in the case of the *Voyage of Maelduin*. This obviously adds to the difficulty of dating, as later editors might insert episodes at will. The exception to this " slow length " is the *Voyage of St. Brendan*, for the writer has hit on the happy plan of bringing the voyagers back each year to certain definite places for the celebration of the great Church festivals.

It is only with a study of certain aspects of the *Imrama*, and kindred tales, that this chapter is concerned. It is not an intention to go into many of the mixed questions in connection with them, which would be indeed beside the mark. All that is here necessary is to show how the scenery, the subjects, and the structure of the *Imrama* influenced the substance and structure of visions which are later in date. At the same time any traces of

eschatology in these voyage-tales must be examined as closely as possible.

To a certain degree the *Imrama* were the literary precursors of the Christian *Fisi*, or Visions, extant in Irish and in Latin. Yet this statement should not be made without qualification. It must not be imagined that it was only when the *Imrama* ceased the *Fisi* commenced. As a matter of fact, the earliest extant vision-fragment, that of Laisrén (latter half of the ninth century) is pretty well a contemporary of *Snedgus and Mac Riagla* (possibly middle of the same century), while it is actually older than *Ui Corra* in its present form. And there may have been other equally early visions, which are now lost. Nor should it be supposed that the *Fisi* were merely a logical development of the *Imrama*. Visions of the Other-World exist in the ecclesiastical literature of every Christian country, and, naturally, would be found in Ireland. But, because they are, for the most part, later in date than the *Imrama*, the Irish visions have attracted to themselves much of the scenery and local colour of these ancient voyage-tales, pagan and Christian alike, and have had their form and structure influenced by them.

The earliest extant *Imram* is the *Voyage of Bran Son of Febal*,[1] which is purely pagan in tone except for one or two touches introduced by a Christian redactor. It is supposed to have been written in the early eighth century, though the earliest manuscript is *circa* 1100.

[1] Meyer and Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i (Grimm Library), London, 1895.

A beautiful maiden appears to Bran, bearing in her hand an apple-branch with twigs of silver and fruit of gold on it. She sings to him of the lovely island-paradise from which she has come, and to which she desires to allure him, in a passage to which, as Dr. Douglas Hyde has truly said, there are few things comparable in literature. But as our object is a prosaic one, namely, the examination of an early set of ideas on later tales, it will suffice to draw attention to those points which were carried on into Christian *Imrama* and visions.

The island to which the maiden desires to bring Bran is supported on four columns of white bronze. In it is to be found :

> An ancient tree with blossoms,
> On which birds call to the (canonical) hours.

Furthermore :

> Yellow steeds are on the sward there,
> Other steeds with crimson hue,
> Other with wool (?) upon their backs
> Of the colour of heaven all-blue.

Mention is made, too, of—

> The conspicuous stone
> From which arise a hundred strains.
> It sings a strain unto the host
> Through long ages, it is not sad.

Nor is the ethical side of this island-paradise overlooked :

> Unknown is wailing or treachery
> In the familiar cultivated land ;
> There is nothing rough or harsh,
> But sweet music striking on the ear.

The inhabitants are—

> Without grief, without sorrow, without death,
> Without any sickness, without debility.

Then Bran goes in quest of this island, and sets out over the sea in a coracle with his companions. He meets a man driving over the waters in a chariot, who is none other than Manannán Mac Lir, the sea-god, who tells Bran that the coracle is really sailing over a beautiful land inhabited by men and women without guile, without sin. Then Bran reaches an island, round which he rows, and sees thereon people laughing and gaping. He sends one of his crew on the island, and no sooner has he reached it than he too falls a-laughing. Next the voyagers arrive at the Land of Women, the leader of whom draws Bran and his coracle to her by means of a ball of thread which she throws to him, and he, on catching it, finds that it adheres to his hand. Finally, Bran leaves this island, and returns to Ireland, to find that generations have passed and that he has become a legendary character. So he bids farewell to the people whom he has met, and departs, no one knows where.

In another pagan piece, *The Adventures of Connla the Fair*,[1] much the same set of ideas occurs. The tale relates how one day a beautiful damsel appeared to Connla, and conversed with him, though she was invisible to his father and the bystanders. She invites him to her land, and promises him a continuance of youth and beauty which will never

[1] Jubainville, *Cours de Littérature Celtique*, t. v, pp. 385 ff.

fade until the Day of Doom (an obviously Christian touch). She says that she comes from a region in which there is neither death, nor sin, nor strife. Then she departs, but before her departure she gives him an apple which is sufficient food for him for a month. At the end of that period she reappears, and chants to him of the land which it were well to seek, a land where there dwell none but women and maidens, and which can be reached ere night, though the sun be already setting. Overcome by her entreaties Connla leaps into her crystal barque, and they both sail away, never again to be beheld by mortal eye.

In the piece entitled *The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn*,[1] which may go back to the eighth century, occurs a description of Magh Mell, the Land of Promise, which resembles that in *Bran*. The mighty warrior Cuchulainn, while lying on his sick-bed, is invited to go to the unseen land, and is told that there he will recover his health. He, however, sends first of all his trusty charioteer Laeg (who apparently goes twice, the first time in a boat of bronze). The latter brings back a glowing account of that land :

There are at the eastern door
Three ancient trees of crimson crystal
From which sing soft-voiced birds incessantly
To the youths from out the kingly rath.

There is a tree in front of the court,
It cannot be matched in harmony,
A tree of silver against which the sun shines,
Like unto gold is its great sheen.

[1] Jubainville, *op. cit.*, pp. 170 ff.

Horses are also found therein :

> There are at the western door
> In the place where the sun goes down,
> A stud of grey steeds, speckled is their mare,
> And another of crimson brown.

It is a land of surpassing beauty, wherein is neither injustice nor lying, and its inhabitants are young maidens and handsome youths.

In the curious piece, entitled *The Adventures of Art Son of Conn*,[1] are features that resemble those found in the *Imrama*. Conn has to go in search of the son of a sinless couple. He reaches Benn Eadair (the Hill of Howth), and from there sails in his coracle from one island to another. Seals, leviathans, porpoises, and many strange beasts of the sea rise up around his boat. Finally he reaches an island with apple-trees and wells of wine, with trees covered with hazel-nuts, and with bees hovering over the fruits. There he finds a goodly dwelling, with its doorposts of bronze and door of crystal, while the roof was thatched with birds' wings, white, and yellow, and blue. Within a handsome young man sits in a chair of crystal.

Subsequently Art the Son of Conn has to go in search of a maiden. He, too, sails in a coracle until he reaches a somewhat similar island, wherein is a company of beautiful women, the fairest of whom is named Creide. She tells him that in the course of his quest, which will be successful, he must pass through a wood where it is as if spear-points were under one's feet, an icy mountain, a glen full of

[1] *Ériu*, vol. iii, pp. 149 ff.

toads, and an icy river spanned by a narrow bridge which is guarded by a giant. Finally, he reaches the stronghold, his destination. "A fair palisade of bronze was round about it . . . a bright shining bower set upon one pillar over the stead, on the very top, where the maiden was."

An examination of the *Imrama* reveals a gradual process of development. The earliest extant stories are pagan, but have received some slight modifications when they have been brought into contact with Christian teaching, as, for example, the allusion to the canonical hours in *Bran*, or to the Day of Doom in *Connla*, which are due to some clerical redactor to whose labours with the pen we owe the preservation of these stories.

In the next stage the Christianising process has advanced considerably, and is to be found, in a greater or less degree, in the four *Imrama* which will now be considered. But, as Miss Hull has well pointed out,[1] the really distinctive change that has taken place is that gradually the conception of a happy land (Magh Mell, Tír Tairngiri, etc.) has passed away—nor do the voyagers go in search of it—and a note of penitence and punishment takes its place. "They are penitential voyages, and this fact entirely revolutionises the structure and tone of the tales"; and in the *Voyage of the Ui Corra* leaves room for the admission of definite eschatological conceptions.

The first of the four to be dealt with here is the well-known *Voyage of Maelduin*,[2] which is mentioned

[1] *Text-book of Irish Literature*, vol. i, p. 130.

[2] R.C., vols. ix and x; Jubainville, *op. cit.*, pp. 449 ff.

in the list contained in the Book of Leinster. In its origin it was pagan, as shown *inter alia* by the fact that it is a Druid who is consulted with respect to the expedition, and who lays down the rules regulating it; as soon as these are broken disaster follows. But at some later period the piece was arranged or edited by Aed Finn (the Fair), who describes himself as Chief Sage (*ardecnaid*) of Ireland. Unfortunately, we have no means of ascertaining at what date this scholar lived. No doubt the ecclesiastical touches are due to him, for Jubainville supposes him to have been a literary man and a cleric.

With regard to the dating of the piece there are differences of opinion. Zimmer ascribes it at latest to the eighth century. Nutt thinks that it was added to, and interpolated, possibly down to the tenth century. In F. Lot's opinion, the piece in its present form, i.e. the work of Aed Finn, is not anterior to the tenth or eleventh century.

It will not be necessary here to give an outline of the story; we shall content ourselves with touching on the points which are pertinent to our purpose. Maelduin's birth is due to the violation of an Abbess by a warrior named Ailill, who is murdered shortly after. When he arrives at manhood Maelduin sets out in a boat in search of his father's murderers. Almost immediately he reaches the island on which they are living; but, because he has disobeyed the Druid's instructions by taking three additional men into the crew, a sudden storm arises which blows his ship out into the ocean.

There he visits many islands, the scenes on some of which came down from the pagan *Imrama*.

On one is an enormous apple-tree, from which Maelduin plucks three apples, each of which sustains the crew for forty days (cf. *Connla*). On one island are trees filled with birds; on another are horses (cf. *Bran*, *Connla*). At one time the voyagers sail over a sea with a beautiful land beneath (cf. Manannán's words to Bran). They meet with an island where the people are all laughing, and when one of the crew lands thereon he does likewise, as in *Bran*. Another island is supported on a single pedestal; in *The Adventures of Art* the bower is on a pillar.

Two episodes may be noted by way of contrast. On one island the voyagers find a palace with a crystal bridge, but the fair *châtelaine* will have nothing to say to Maelduin. However, on another island they meet with a queen and her daughters, where they are entertained with a hospitality *conformément au vieil usage de l'épopée irlandaise*, but not in conformity with Christian morals! Accordingly Jubainville thinks that the first incident is due to a Christian redactor; but Boswell (p. 147) acutely points out that the chastity motive, as well as its opposite, is found in purely pagan literature.

Some of the episodes in the tale come down, no doubt, from purely pagan sources, but have a certain infernal significance, and are not without their apparent influence on a later vision, that of Tundal. On one island are huge creatures like ants, which try to eat the voyagers. On another is to be seen a horse race, but the horses, their riders, and the spectators are all demons. On this Boswell remarks (p. 152) that "ecclesiastical in-

fluences may have depicted in Stygian colouring the pagan Elysium in which departed heroes continued to ply their wonted sports." It will be remembered that horses are mentioned in *Bran* and the *Sick-bed of Cuchulainn*. Another island is red-hot, and inhabited by pig-like creatures, also red-hot ; while on another is a burning river, a feature common to visions of East and West. On another are to be found giant blacksmiths.

Some of the islands are inhabited by individual monsters. On one is a huge creature, in shape like a horse, but with dog's paws, who desires to devour them, together with their vessel, the latter not being so difficult of assimilation as the reader might imagine, as it was constructed of hides, not of wood. On another was a beast which exercised itself with preternatural agility ; when the voyagers fled from its island it threw stones at them, as did also the horse-like creature.

The inhabitants of one island were clad in black raiment, with black headdresses, while their skins were of the same sable hue. They never rested for a moment, but continually wandered about wringing their hands, weeping and wailing. Though no ethical significance is attached to this scene, yet it is almost purgatorial, and, though apparently pagan, may have paved the way for the conception of the wandering souls, the *mali non valde*, as found in the *Vision of Adamnán*.

There is another episode which vividly strikes the imagination. One island was surrounded by a wall of fire, which revolved continually. It had one doorway in it, and whenever this in its revolution

would pass by them the voyagers could see within the inhabitants of the island, wearing rich garments, and feasting with goblets of gold. On this Boswell remarks (p. 154): "Never perhaps in sacred or profane literature has a passage of equal brevity portrayed that Celestial Feast which, as fact or symbol, enters into every creed . . . there is no superfluous detail, but the picture flashes out before the readers' eye as it did before Maelduin and his crew."

There is, however, a series of incidents in *Maelduin* which is definitely Christian, and which is derived from the customs of Irish monks seeking out lonely islands and inaccessible crags wherein to place their abodes in order that they might lead a solitary life of undisturbed contemplation and prayer. One island is surrounded by a wall of gold, wherein dwells a hermit clad in his own hair. On another is an aged priest, similarly clad, who had himself gone on an *Imram* in his time. He had belonged to the community of Brenann of Birr, and had set out with fifteen companions on a voyage of discovery; of the boat-load he was the sole survivor.

Elsewhere Maelduin and his comrades see a distant object in the sea, which seems like a great white bird; but when they draw near to it they discover it to be a hermit, all covered with long white hair, and kneeling on a rock which stands up out of the water. This man had been a dishonest cook in a monastery. At an earlier stage in their journey they find an island covered with trees, in the branches of which are birds beyond count. An old man approaches them, also clad in his own hair, and tells them that these birds are the souls of

all his people and relations, who await the Day of Judgment. This, be it noted, is the first instance of the "bird-soul" motive, and is a Christianised form of a conception found in such pagan tales as *Bran* and the *Sick-bed*. It also marks the commencement of the belief in a distinctly paradisaical state—at a slightly later period these bird-souls would represent the *boni sed non valde*.

The next *Imram* to be considered is that entitled the *Voyage of the Ui Corra*.[1] This is included in the Book of Leinster list, and shows far more ecclesiastical influence than do the other three *Imrama*. Its date is variously given. Whitley Stokes considers it to be probably eleventh century: while Zimmer holds that the original was written in the eighth century, but that the present text is a rehandling of the thirteenth century.

The tale relates how a certain man Conall married the daughter of the Erenach of Clogher (who, *pace* Joyce and O'Curry, is styled "cleric" in the text). All their children die at birth, and in despair they resolve to make a compact with the Devil to see if they can obtain a son from him. In due time three sons, triplets, are born, who are baptised by heathen baptism with the names of Lochan, Einne, and Silvester. When they grow to manhood they recall to mind that they are the Devil's children, and that in consequence they should do his pleasure. So accordingly they set to work to burn the churches and slay the clerics in the province of Connaught. At the end of the year they remember that they have not yet burnt the church of their mother's

[1] R.C., vol. xiv, pp. 22 ff.

father, and accordingly set out to make good this omission. Their grandfather welcomes them, and that night, as they lay asleep, a vision of Heaven and Hell was vouchsafed to the eldest brother Lochan. This has been dealt with in Chapter I.

As a result of this vision they repent of their evil deeds, and go to St. Finden of Clonard, who gives them religious instructions for a year and a day, and then bids them go and restore the churches they have burnt, promising to each of them the strength of a hundred men.* When they have finished building the last church, Kinvarra on Galway Bay, they look out over the boundless ocean, and resolve to sail upon it on a voyage of adventure and penance. A boat is built, and a crew of nine embarks, viz. the three Ui Corra, a bishop, a priest, a deacon, the artificer who constructed the boat, a gleeman, and an attendant.

Many of their experiences resemble those of Maelduin and his crew. They come to an island standing on a single pillar, another divided into four, others with solitary clerics and bird-souls, and so on. In one island they meet with a fair woman who gives them food that tastes as each man would have it taste, as in *Maelduin*; but there is no talk of love, and she bids them depart, as that is not to be the place of their resurrection. Gone too, as a result of ecclesiastical influence, are the complaisant queen and her daughters, and their place is taken by a community of St. Ailbe of Emly, numbering twelve men, who inform the voyagers that they are the crew of one of Ailbe's curraghs, and that God has permitted them to remain there till Judgment, praying for everyone who is drowned at sea. Here

there is possibly an allusion to a lost tale. For in a litany in the Book of Leinster mention is made of the twenty-four men from Munster who went over the sea with Ailbe to visit the Land of Promise (*Terra Repromissionis*), who are there alive till Doom.

But in our *Imram* the community tell the voyagers that they are the crew of one of Ailbe's curraghs. In the litany alluded to above there is a mention of " the twelve men who went to death with Ailbe." Plummer queries, " Are these last the crew of the other curragh, lost at sea ? " In one account of St. Brendan's voyage the twenty-four are found on an island. Ailbe himself went on one occasion over the ocean in a mystic boat, but returned after three hours, bringing a vine-shoot with grapes on it.[1]

Like Maelduin the Ui Corra meet with incidents that have a decidedly infernal significance. They find a sea of fire full of men's heads, which are continually dashing against each other ; this at once reminds us of a passage in the *Vision of Laisrén*. They also reach an island with dead people on one side of it, and living people on the other. Round it is a burning sea, the waves of which break over the island continually, and torment the living people. Elsewhere they find an island where the inhabitants are being torn by black birds with red-hot beaks and talons. Those so punished are dishonest smiths and braziers ; while in addition their tongues are burning because they reviled people during life. It is remarkable how often the punishment for the misuse of the tongue occurs in the Irish visions.

These two groups of sorely tormented people are

[1] Plummer, *Vitae SS.*, p. clxxxiii.

apparently conceived of as suffering punishment in this world, though the *mise-en-scène* is entirely infernal. But the writer is here working under what might be termed the *Imram*-tradition. That is to say, he has his choice of describing the punishment as taking place either in this world or in Hell. But, as he is intent on giving a description of a voyage over the terrestrial ocean, he evidently deems it fitting that the scene of punishment should be laid therein, and not in the abode of the damned.

However, in another similar episode he breaks away from the *Imram*-tradition, and transfers the scene of punishment to the infernal regions. The voyagers see an island of immense flat stones, all red-hot. On these are lying vast multitudes of people in torment, some of whom have red-hot spits driven through their bodies. In answer to their question one of the tormented persons tells them that this is a flagstone of the flagstones of Hell (*ifern*), and that any who come hither shall never leave it till Doomsday; in other words, we have here that conception of Hell which prevailed in the earlier period of the Irish Church, and which has been dealt with at length in the first two chapters. Fiery flagstones are mentioned in the concluding portion of *Ad.* II. In another part of the sea the Ui Corra see great flocks of birds. One of them alights on the curragh, and tells them that these birds are the souls that are permitted to come out of Hell every Sunday.

There are three episodes in the tale that must be taken together. The Ui Corra came upon a man who is digging with a fiery spade, while ever and

anon a fiery wave breaks over him. He tells the voyagers that he is thus punished because in life he used to dig on Sundays; and he beseeches them to pray for him that his pains may be lightened. Next they meet with a gigantic man riding over the sea—perhaps an ecclesiastical jibe at Manannán—on a horse of fire. He had stolen his brother's horse, and had ridden him on Sundays; he is now punished, not for the theft, apparently, but for Sabbath-breaking. A little farther on they find a giant belching out flakes of fire, and carrying a burning faggot on his back. He too is punished for cutting firewood, and bringing it home, on the Sabbath.

These three episodes have been introduced into the tale by some strict Sabbatarian under the influence of the *Cáin Domnaig*. That tract consists of three parts: the first is the Epistle of Jesus on the observance of Sunday, a text and translation of which have been published in *Ériu*, vol. ii, p. 189. This distinctly forbids the performance on Sunday of such works as splitting firewood or horse-riding. Indeed, it says that "whatever horse is ridden on Sunday, it is a horse of fire in the fork of its rider in Hell." The second part of the *Cáin* contains three examples of supernatural punishment for the violation of the law. In the Liber Flavus, and in a British Museum MS. (Harley 5280), they are as follows:

(1) A Culdee sees on Sunday a little boy carrying a load of firewood. At his prayer the wood catches fire, and burns the lad to death. (2) A certain sage used to receive food every afternoon by the hands of an angel. One Sunday, as he was walking

round his oratory, he knocked a snail (?) off the path with his staff. In punishment for this the angelic food was withheld from him for a while. (3) A man drove cattle out of a churchyard on Sunday. At this the "elder of the church" had him bound and placed on the seashore, where three waves demolished him.

There is an important difference, however, between the two sets of punishments. In Liber Flavus and Harley 5280 the punishment of the Sabbath-breakers is represented as taking place under purely terrestrial conditions, and may be regarded as special visitations of the Divine anger. But in *Ui Corra* the punishments are inflicted under conditions very far from terrestrial; in fact, the three persons punished are conceived of as being in Hell, not on earth. Why then, it might be asked, did the writer not say so, especially since he has already made mention of souls in Hell? To which it might be answered that here again he is working under the influence of the *Imram*-tradition.

There remain for consideration two closely related *Imrama*, namely, the *Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla*,[1] the historical allusions in which belong to the middle of the seventh century; and the *Voyage of St. Columba's Clerics*,[2] which is styled an *Echtra*, and is supposed by its editor, Dr. Whitley Stokes, to belong to the tenth century. In the first, the men of Ross murder their chieftain, who has reduced them to a state of cruel servitude; and, by way of punishment, at the instance of St. Columba, they are set adrift in boats on the sea. Snedgus and Mac Riagla inform them of the sentence

[1] R.C., vol. ix, pp. 14 ff. [2] R.C., vol. xxvi, pp. 130 ff.

passed on them. Shortly after they themselves embark on their own account. They come, *inter alia*, to islands inhabited by cat-headed warriors, by men with dog's heads, and with heads of swine.

They meet too with the now familiar bird-episode, which has now become very definitely Christian. On this particular island there is but one immense tree, which is covered with birds singing psalms and canticles, praising the Lord, for these are "the birds of the plain of Heaven." On the top of the tree is a great bird, with a head of gold and wings of silver, who tells the other birds of the Creation, of Christ's Nativity and Passion, and of Doom. When the other birds hear of Doom they beat their sides with their wings till the blood comes. Much the same is found in *Clerics*.

After some further adventures they come in due course to the island where dwell the banished men of Ross, who tell them that they (the men of Ross) are to abide there till Judgment, "for good are we without sin, without wickedness"; that is to say, they represent the *boni non valde*. They also inform them that in the same island are Enoch and Elijah; the former in a secret place, "until we shall all go to battle at the Day of Judgment"; the latter is in a fair dwelling. In *Clerics* both patriarchs are in a secret place until they go to battle with Antichrist.[1]

Finally, they arrive at a lofty island, where there is a king's dwelling in which there are a hundred doors, and a priest saying Mass at an altar at every

[1] Aelfric (*Homilies*, vol. i, p. 309) says that Enoch and Elijah are in the aerial heaven in some secret dwelling-place.

door. Here the conception of a noble mansion, as found in *Maelduin* more than once, has been definitely christianised.

But there is one very curious episode in *Clerics* which does not occur in *Snedgus*. When the voyagers, Snedgus and Mac Riagail (as it is there spelt), leave the island where is found the great tree with birds a storm arises. Their souls are severed from their bodies, and taken to see Heaven and Hell—and with an audacity almost without parallel the writer coolly transfers to them the entire *Vision of Adamnán*, and makes it appear as if it were *their* experience! We may be grateful to him, however, for having preserved for us a text of that vision. Another text appears to have been contained in the Book of Lismore, but was lost, except for the ending, at some unknown date.

The episode of the great bird preaching to the bird-flocks finds some curious parallels elsewhere in Irish ecclesiastical literature. In *The Two Sorrows of the Kingdom of Heaven*,[1] a composite piece which may lie between ten and eleven hundred, Enoch and Elijah are in paradise. The souls, in bird form, come to eat the berries of the Tree of Life. When they are satisfied Elijah preaches to them, and when he is finished they beat their wings against their sides until the blood comes, for fear of Doom. Much the same is found in section 33 of the *Vision of Adamnán* (trans. Boswell), which is probably an addition to the original piece. In the modern versions of *The Evernew Tongue*,[2] it is said that there are three companies of birds in the

[1] R.C., vol. xxi, p. 377. [2] R.C., vol. xxviii, p. 301.

terrestrial paradise, whose task it is to praise the Lord ; to these Enoch and Elijah speak concerning the Day of Judgment. In this last no mention is made of a tree.

It is possible that *The Two Sorrows* represents the nearest approach we have to the original version of the episode, from whatever source it was derived ; in that Elijah (with Enoch) is represented as being in paradise—the terrestrial paradise, as one may infer from the mention of the Tree of Life, though from the title of the piece it might also be inferred that they were in Heaven ! But *The Two Sorrows* is very loosely constructed from different sources. In it Elijah alone preaches under the Tree to the birds. But the author of *Snedgus* (and, following him, the author or editor of *Clerics*) has seized on the piece, and adapted it to the imagery of the *Imrama*. The conception of a tree filled with birds was already familiar, as was also that of a single bird. The latter is, accordingly, substituted for Elijah in *Snedgus*, and fittingly placed on *the summit* of the tree. The two Patriarchs have been divorced from the episode, and as something had to be done with them, they were transferred to an island where dwell the blameless men of Ross, who here represent the *boni non valde*, and are in a paradisaical state.

If this theory of borrowing and alteration be correct it would imply a late date for *Snedgus*, in its present form, perhaps not earlier than the eleventh century. It is obvious that the companion piece, *St. Columba's Clerics*, must also be late, in its present form, as it embodies the *Vision*

of Adamnán, which appears to be not later than the eleventh century. It seems probable, too, that *Clerics* has borrowed the allusion to Antichrist from *The Two Sorrows*.[1]

Lastly, something must be said with respect to some of the incidents found in the writings connected with St. Brendan, justly surnamed the Navigator on account of his voyaging propensities. Here, again, it is beside our purpose to deal with the numerous vexed questions that have arisen in connection with the relationship of the various documents ; all that is here necessary is to show how certain conceptions were carried on, and as well to touch on questions of eschatology.

The texts, published by Drs. C. Plummer and Whitley Stokes, fall into two classes. Certain of them are concerned with the life of the saint (*Vita Brendani*), while others give an account of his voyage (*Navigatio Brendani*). Both classes now contain travel-incidents, and Plummer considers that the original *Life* was not free from such.[2]

[1] See Seymour, *Notes on Apocrypha in Ireland* (P.R.I.A., vol. xxxvii). Despite what the puzzle-headed author of *The Two Sorrows* says in his concluding sentence, the "Two Sorrows" appear to be: (1) that the Patriarchs cannot fly with the birds, (cf. the *Poem of the Fifty Questions*, in which it is asked "What grief is there in Heaven ?" and the answer is "Elias and Enoch that they cannot fly with the birds in Paradise.") ; and (2) that the Patriarchs must suffer death at the hands of Antichrist. (Cf. the Anglo-Saxon prose dialogue of Adrian and Ritheus (Kemble, *Solomon and Saturn*, p. 201.)

[2] Plummer, *Vitae SS.*, vol. i, pp. 98 ff. ; vol. ii, pp. 270 ff. ; Plummer, *Lives of Irish SS.*, pp. 48 ff., 93 ff. ; W. Stokes, *Lives of SS. from Book of Lismore*, pp. 247 ff. ; O'Donoghue, *Brendaniana, St. Brendan the Voyager* (Dublin, 1895).

The motive which prompted St. Brendan to undertake his voyage is not the same in every document. In the *Life* he sets out in search of a distant island revealed to him in answer to his prayer for some secret place to which he might retire, after the manner of many other Irish monks. But in the *Voyage* he is prompted to go and seek the Land of Promise as a result of the glowing description given of it to him by a certain man named Barrinthus, who had voyaged thither. Fired by his tale, Brendan sets out, and at length comes to a wonderful land veiled from mortal eyes by a dense cloud. Here we really go back in spirit to the pagan *Imrama*, for, whereas in *Maelduin*, and the other three *Imrama* already dealt with, the voyages are undertaken in connection with some crime committed, Brendan, like Bran and Connla, undertakes his in the sheer desire to reach a Tír Tairngiri. Furthermore, the beautiful maiden, who allures the voyager by her vivid picture of the unseen land, is in the *Voyage* represented by Barrinthus, whose equally vivid description sends Brendan on his quest.

In Plummer's *Vita prima*, in his *Vita secunda*, in his Irish *Life*, and in the *Life* in the Book of Lismore, the voyagers meet with familiar episodes. They come upon islands inhabited by communities of monks, by solitary clerics, by demon smiths. On one is a fortress surrounded by a crystal wall, within which are buildings, constructed not of wood but of marble, all glittering with gold and precious stones. One island is supported on four pillars, another on seven. Another is tenanted by monstrous sea-cats; while on another dwells an

aged hermit, who bids them depart quickly lest a huge sea-cat should devour them: the latter had developed from an ordinary domestic cat to its present gigantic size. In one region they sail over a sea so clear that they can see the fish and marine monsters far beneath.

On one island is found the familiar bird episode, though with a somewhat different motive. The birds here are the angels who participated in Lucifer's fall, though innocently. They wanted for no good thing, except that they could not see the Majesty of God, nor His glory.

It has been said, and apparently with truth, that the land sought for by adventurous mortals, in pagan and Christian *Imrama* alike, is in reality not an "Other-World," but a spot on this terrestrial globe, hidden in the depths of the sea, or lying on the far side of a vast stretch of water. Yet at times the boundary between the two states wears very thin, as in the case of the Sabbath-breaking incidents in *Ui Corra*, while it definitely breaks down in the same piece when the writer comes to describe the "flagstones of Hell." The same is true in *Brendan*. As the saint is engaged in sailing over the material ocean he sees the Devil coming to meet him across the water—a link with *Bran*, as Satan is an obvious substitution for Manannán. The Devil then guides him to the gates of Hell, and allows him to look in; of its torments a long and turgid description is given in the Book of Lismore text.

Plummer has published[1] a unique version of the Voyage from a Bodleian Ms.[2] which, in his opinion,

[1] *Vitae SS.*, vol. ii, pp. 270 ff. [2] e *Musaeo* III.

is not later than 1100, and may be much earlier. This he considers to be the Latin original of an Anglo-Norman poem which has been published by Suchier and Michel, and which is said to be the earliest version of the Brendan legend in any vernacular.[1]

In this version occurs a detailed description of the Terra Repromissionis, the Land of Promise. It is surrounded by dense darkness, which parts, however, and allows the voyagers to pass through. When they reach land they find that the paradise is encircled by an immense wall, unsculptured, gleaming like snow, and glittering with precious stones, amongst which were the topaz, chrysoprasis, jacinth, chalcedony, emerald, sardius, jasper, amethyst, onyx, crystal, beryl, and others. The gate of paradise was guarded by two dragons, while over it a spear hung threateningly, point downwards. But a beautiful youth made his appearance, and, like the guardian angel in visions, led them through in safety. Within they found a land of flowering meads, limpid streams, bright-hued fragant flowers, abundant fruits, rivers of milk, and dew that distilled honey. The air was warm, and no clouds obscured the sky. The mountains were of gold, and the river-sands composed of gems. The inhabitants suffered nothing from heat nor cold, hunger nor thirst, nor did sadness, want, or adversity ever trouble them.

The youth led Brendan and his companions to the summit of a mountain, from which they could behold countless indescribable scenes. They saw

[1] C.Z., vol. v, pp. 138–40. An abstract of the poem is in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June 1836, p. 807.

angels, and heard them singing, but because of the infirmity of the flesh they were unable to bear it. His guide told Brendan that the glory was far greater than he could see, and that he could not comprehend more, because he had come in the flesh; but he added that soon he would come hither in the spirit, and there await the Judgment.

In other versions of the story, however, the voyagers are not so successful. They penetrate the darkness, and disembark on the paradisaical island. For forty days they explore it, without reaching its limits, until at length they come to a great river, which they are unable to cross. A youth thereupon appears to them, and bids them return home, which they do accordingly.

There now only remains for consideration the story of Judas Iscariot, which forms the most remarkable of all the episodes in the Brendan legend. This falls into two classes, according to motive.

In the first, and apparently the earliest, class appears the motive of the Sabbath rest and reward for good deeds. This conception is greatly elaborated in Plummer's unique text, his *Vita secunda*. The voyagers see a rock projecting above the surface of the ocean, to which is clinging a man who is severely buffeted by the waves of the sea, which continually threaten to wash him off. He has a cloth like a veil before his face. This is Judas Iscariot. In reply to Brendan's question he says that there are two Hells, one of which is on top of a mountain, and is hot, while the other is cold, and lies in the depths of a valley. He alone, of all the lost, has the doubtful privilege of suffering in

both. He gives them a gruesome programme of his torments, and says that on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday he suffers in the uppermost Hell, and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the lower one. But that state in which they now see him is the rest which is afforded him from Saturday evening to Sunday evening, from Christmas to Epiphany, at Easter, at Pentecost, and on the feasts of the Virgin. In addition he is here rewarded for the good deeds he had done in life. From the money of which he had charge (cf. *John* xii. 6) he had bought a cloth and given it to a naked man; and so that veil protected his face from the beating of the waves. He had also built a bridge over a river, in which many people had been drowned, and for that reason the rock was placed there to which he might cling.

With this agrees in substance a passage in Plummer's *Lives of Irish Saints*, though there are some differences of detail. The cloth lashes him under the eyes because he had bought it, not out of his own money, but out of that belonging to Christ. According to some versions the cloth was suspended on two iron forks or prongs, which he had once given to the priests to support their cauldrons. He had placed the stone in a hole in the road for the benefit of wayfarers.[1]

Is this treatment accorded to Judas Iscariot in the Brendan legend unique, and so confined to Irish literature? It would appear to be so. Parallels to the story can be found elsewhere, but such are

[1] *Vitae SS.*, vol. ii, p. 285; *Lives*, p. 64; O'Donoghue, *Brendaniana*, p. 163.

plainly evidences of borrowing. In the lay of Baudoin du Bourg a meeting with Judas is recorded. Baudoin and the heathen Poliban come across a spot in the ocean where is Judas, who tells them that for the sake of some good deeds he has performed he is set free from Hell on Saturdays and Sundays. The description of the terrors of Hell makes such an impression on Poliban that he determines to become a Christian, and takes the name of Brandon—which of itself is a sufficient indication of the source from which the episode was derived. Again, Huon of Bordeaux finds Judas out in the sea, where all the waters and rivers of the world meet. That is his eternal abode, and nothing is said of a Sabbath rest. He is terribly lashed by the tumultuous waves, but his right side is protected by a canvas which he once gave away for the love of God. This, too, is an obvious borrowing from the Brendan legend.[1]

The underlying conceptions in the Judas episode are, first of all, that the good deeds done in life by a sinner bring their reward in the Other-World in the shape of protection from torment. If these are not done, however, from the purest motives, they may carry with them a certain degree of torment. We shall see that these two conceptions find parallels, more or less close, in Irish ecclesiastical literature.

In *Ad. II* certain sinners are set on islands in the midst of a fiery sea. But around them is a silver wall (a feature found in the *Imrama*) built of the

[1] *Baudoin* is in *Hist. Litt. de la France*, t. xxv, pp. 574 ff.; *Huon of Bordeaux* is in E.E.T.S. (extra series), vol. xli, pp. 363 ff.

raiment and the alms which they had bestowed during life, and by means of which they are protected from the fiery billows. The Ui Corra in their voyaging meet with a bird that was vivid (red-hot ?) all over, except for three beautiful streaks on her breast. This was the soul of a married woman who had neglected her wifely duty. Three times, however, she had come to her husband in his death-sickness, and for those three good deeds she had the three beautiful streaks on her breast ; had she performed her duty as she should, she would have been equally beautiful all over. In the story of King Brandub it is stated that he was saved from the jaws of the infernal monster who sought to devour him by means of a wether which he had given in charity, and which was offered in his stead.

Again, it is related that on one occasion an Irish saint named Corpraeus (Cairbre Crom, Bishop of Clonmacnois, who died A.D. 899) was visited by the soul of King Maelsechlainn (High King of Ireland, died A.D. 860), who was clad in a shirt (*indusium*) with only one sleeve. In reply to the saint's question, he said that one day some scholars asked him for a garment to cover a half-naked student. As he had nothing at hand he ordered the Queen to give a certain costly *indusium* which belonged to him. "*Et haec est causa talis mei indusarii velaminis.*" The story is related in a confused manner, but apparently the imperfection of the garment, i.e. the want of a sleeve, was intended to imply some lack of real charity in the King's almsgiving. We may compare with this the cloth which strikes Judas in the face because

he had purchased it out of Christ's money, not his own.[1]

Thus it would seem, in the absence of direct evidence to the contrary, that the story of Judas's freedom from Hell, and the protection afforded to him by means of objects which he had bestowed in charity, was not derived from outside legends, but is purely Irish in origin, and finds parallels in Irish ecclesiastical literature. Beyond this it seems impossible to say anything with certainty.

But in some of the versions of the Brendan legend a very different turn is given to the Judas episode. In Plummer's *Vita prima* it is related that one very severe winter's day the monks said to themselves, "Could the pain of Hell be worse than this cold?" In reply St. Brendan tells them that one day in the course of his voyaging the mouth of the sea opened. In its depths he saw a stone, on which was Judas. Fiery waves flowed over the stone from the east, and icy cold ones from the west. Judas said to them, "*Usque ad diem magni judicii hic expecto resurrectionem.*"

In that piece, entitled *The Twelve Apostles of Ireland*, Brendan is shown Hell by the Devil. In its very depths he sees a man standing on a rock. A wave of fire of the infernal sea would break over him from in front, and an icy cold wave from

[1] *Martyrology of Donegal*, p. 67; Colgan, *Acta SS.*, p. 508; *Acta SS. Boll. Martii*, vol. vi, p. 467; R.C., vol. xxvi, pp. 360 ff.; *In Mart. Don.* (in which no mention is made of the garment) the king is said to be in Purgatory. But this is a late and obvious alteration, for in the oldest version of the story (that in R.C.) he is placed in Hell, in accordance with the eschatological views of the first period.

behind, alternately. This was Judas's punishment until Doom.[1]

In the above two passages Judas is represented as enduring his punishment in Hell, not enjoying his hours of ease, of which, indeed, nothing at all is said. This treatment of the subject is obviously later than that which describes the Sabbath rest and reward; for it is much more reasonable to suppose that some writer would have substituted for that last the conception of Judas's eternal punishment rather than the other way round. The change is due to some later writer, who was plainly shocked at the thought that *any* respite from pain could be given to the arch-traitor, especially such a lengthy respite, for, in some versions of the story, Judas gets *nearly four months'* ease in the year, in contrast to the ordinary sinner, who only enjoys a respite on the Sabbath! The treatment of the stone is also a proof of lateness; the writer has borrowed it from the earlier versions, and introduced it into his story, where it quite loses its true significance. It is possible that he has also derived his alternate waves of heat and cold from the hot and cold Hells in which Judas is alternately tormented.

The four related *Imrama* (which have been briefly styled in the foregoing pages—*Maelduin*, *Ui Corra*, *Snedgus*, and *Clerics*) *in their present form* appear to be late. *Maelduin* is supposed by Dr. Whitley

[1] Plummer, *Vitae SS.*, vol. i, p. 147; *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 96. The Archbishop Marsh's Library text follows that of *Vitae*, except that it adds *et hec pena maxima sibi requies videbatur*; *in dominicis enim diebus pro requie sibi clementia Dei talis locus datur*; thus turning a state of punishment into a Sabbath rest.

Stokes to be not anterior to the tenth or eleventh century, and is, at any rate, the earliest of the four as we now have them. Next comes *Ui Corra*, to which the eleventh-century date assigned is probably satisfactory. We have shown that *Snedgus* and *Clerics* may be attributed to the same century, or thereabouts. Thus all four belong, roundly, to the same period, with *Maelduin* as the earliest by a century or so. That, of course, is not equivalent to saying that all the material contained in them is of equally late date. On the other hand, most of it appears to be early.

When they are thus grouped together we can detect in them the gradual emergence of ideas which were destined to have their share in bringing about a radical change in the conception of the Unseen World, and its various states of bliss and woe: the result is found in the *Vision of Adamnán*, which is the earliest exponent of the new eschatological views. This question must now be touched on, and, in order to do so, it will be necessary to anticipate something of what will be said in the next chapter.

It has already been shown in Chapters I and II that the Celtic Church in Ireland down to about the tenth century divided the Unseen World into two compartments only, Heaven and Hell. The latter was the abode, not merely of the utterly lost, but of certain who would ultimately be saved, and so must of necessity undergo purgation in order to fit them for entrance into Heaven. But there appears to be no means of ascertaining in what state the souls were put who were not quite good enough for immediate entrance into Heaven after

death. It is true that such were cleansed from their imperfections by the Fire of Doom. But that cleansing process only took place at the Last Day; in what intermediate state these souls existed in the meantime nothing appears to be known, nor does any early Irish ecclesiastical document throw any light on the subject, so far as the present writer is aware.

But about the tenth century a change is noticed in Irish eschatology, due to the introduction of new ideas, which ultimately resulted in the division of the Celtic Other-World into four compartments, viz. Heaven, Hell, a place for the not perfectly good (*boni non valde*), and a place for the not perfectly bad (*mali non valde*); those in the two last states ultimately attain salvation.

This change was partly due to external influences such as the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great and the *Vision of Drithelm*. But it appears to have been brought about as well by internal influences, that is to say, it owed something to the description of regions, pleasant and otherwise, in the pre-Christian literature of Ireland. There was the pagan Elysium, on the one hand, and on the other, regions haunted by monsters, perilous glens, icy rivers, weird forests, and so on. These conceptions, found in the pagan *Imrama* and *Echtrai*, were taken into the Christian and semi-Christian *Imrama*; and in these we can trace the development of a set of ideas which finally culminated in the addition of two definite compartments to the Celtic Christian Other-World.

The state of the *boni non valde* is at least suggested by that noble picture in *Maelduin* of the island with the revolving wall, through the door of which may

be seen the feasters, though it is quite possible that the episode owes nothing to Christianity. The story of the hermit with the bird-souls abiding on an island till Doomsday brings us much nearer to the conception of a paradisaical state of waiting. The same is true of certain episodes in *Ui Corra* (viz. the cleric Dega and the crew of Ailbe's curragh). In *Snedgus* and in *Clerics* the paradisaical state is very clearly marked in the island where dwell the men of Ross until Judgment, who are " good without sin, without wickedness," and whose abode is made so definitely paradisaical by the introduction of Enoch and Elijah. It must be noted that all these persons, i.e. Dega, Ailbe's monks, the men of Ross, are conceived of as being still *in the body*, not dead. Here, again, the writer is working under the influence of the *Imram*-tradition, for, though the scenes described on islands in various *Imrama* are sufficiently non-human and semi-supernatural, yet the writer conceives of them as taking place on terrestrial islands set in a terrestrial ocean. But it was obviously no long step from the conception of a terrestrial island inhabited by almost perfect mortals to the conception of an abode in the unseen tenanted by souls almost untainted by sin. And this step was rendered easy by the writers of *Snedgus* and *Clerics* introducing into an earthly island the two Old Testament Patriarchs, who, alone of all men, had never passed through the gates of death.

The state of the *mali non valde*, again, is foreshadowed in the episode in *Maelduin*, where the voyagers see the black-robed mourners of sable complexion, who never rest, but move about

continually, weeping and wringing their hands. The *restlessness* of these people connects their state with that of the *mali non valde* in the *Vision of Adamnán*. The island in *Maelduin*, with its soil and animals red-hot, and that with the river of fire, savour rather of Hell than of any intermediate state. In *Ui Corra* there is an island with living and dead on it, over which fiery waves break; and another where dishonest artisans are punished. No indication is given in the published text as to the location in which these persons are supposed to be; but as the writer has distinctly mentioned Hell elsewhere, it may be assumed that it is that abode which he has in his mind, though here again he seems influenced by the *Imram*-tradition. It is possible that he has borrowed these two episodes, as well as that of the "flagstones of Hell" from some early Irish Vision of Hell, now lost. In *Snedgus* and in *Clerics* there appears to be nothing which might be described as a forerunner of the state of the *mali non valde*.

By the tenth or eleventh century we find that Irish eschatology has undergone a radical change, and that two new regions, intermediate states, have been added to the geography of the Other-World. Towards this change the Christian *Imrama*, themselves largely dependent on similar pagan pieces, were a contributory cause. At the same time they influenced the imagery, and coloured the descriptions, which the later vision-writers (in *Adamnán* and *Tundal*) gave, not merely of those two states of waiting, but of the final states as well. This subject will be dealt with at some length in the following chapters.

Chapter IV

THE VISION OF ADAMNÁN

The Supposed Author. Analysis of the Vision. The Fourfold Division of Souls immediately after Death. Zimmer's Theory. The Reformation in the Twelfth Century. *The Seven Heavens.* Debt to earlier Irish Writings. The Fire of Doom.

IT has already been pointed out in Chapter I that the *Vision of Adamnán* is found in four texts. In all four the piece consists of two parts; the latter part, which has been designated by the symbol *Ad. II*, is a portion of an early Irish vision, and accordingly has been placed in the first chapter of this volume. There now remain for consideration sections 1–20 in Boswell's translation; these form the Vision proper, i.e. that which Adamnán is said to have been shown by his guardian angel. This accordingly will be alluded to as the *Vision of Adamnán*, or, more briefly, as *Adamnán*.

It cannot be maintained that the piece comes from the pen of Adamnán, Abbot of Iona, who died A.D. 703. In view of the fact that it is an *Irish* document the eschatology alone would forbid such an early date, for it exhibits—and is the first Irish ecclesiastical document to do so—a late conception of the Unseen, that is to say, a clear-cut fourfold division in contrast to the twofold division which had hitherto held the field in Ireland. *Adamnán* is an eleventh-century composition, to which the unknown writer has attached the name of a great saint, a revered "high scholar of the western

world," and one, too, well known for his literary ability, just as men in earlier times attached the names of patriarchs or apostles to their apocryphal writings.

But there was another, and a stronger, reason for the use of Adamnán's name. The vision which is attributed to him sets forth an eschatological scheme which had hitherto been unknown in the Irish Church. Now Adamnán in his time had been a supporter and promoter of new ideas; under the influence of the Venerable Bede he had endeavoured to induce his fellow-countrymen, and his monks at Iona, to accept the reformed method of keeping Easter which had been introduced into England by Augustine. And so, because he was an innovator, his name would have been suitably attached to a vision which appears to have been deliberately written with the object of introducing the newer eschatological views to the Irish Church. But it will be remembered that in Chapter II we have pointed out that the Visions of Drithelm and of the Monk of Wenlock, each with its fourfold division, appear to represent the eschatology of the Celtic Church in England at the commencement of the eighth century. In view of that, it is possible that *Adamnán* does actually contain the eschatological views held by Adamnán, and which, no doubt, he would have desired to impress on those whom he was endeavouring to convert to his way of thinking on the Paschal question.

But the anonymous writer of *Adamnán* was a man of no ordinary ability; he was touched with

the fire of genius, and had as well caught a glimpse of the Vision Beatific. His attempt at describing the Indescribable, the appearance of the Deity, is naïve but awe-inspiring and wonderfully impressive. The restraint shown by him in omitting a description of Hell is remarkable; what he says in section 20 is indeed sufficient, but it would almost seem as if in the sweetness of his nature he shrank from giving details.

In the following analysis use has been made of the translations of Boswell and of Whitley Stokes, but the former's division into sections has been followed as being the most convenient. The paragraph headings have been inserted for the sake of clearness by the present writer.

Sections 1–3 are introductory. To the saints and just ones visions have been vouchsafed. St. Peter saw a vessel let down with cords, from which last came music. St. Paul was caught up to Heaven and heard angelic speech. On the day of the Virgin's death the Apostles were shown Hell and its torments. This last is extremely interesting, as it comes to us from a Syrian apocryphon which was known in Ireland.[1] Finally, to Adamnán a vision was revealed, for on the feast of St. John the Baptist his soul was taken from the body and conveyed to the Other-World by its guardian angel. It should be noted that from section 5 on, no further allusion is made to the visionary or his attendant until section 31 is reached; indeed, the piece becomes a description of the Unseen, not a vision.

[1] See J.T.S., vol. xxiii, pp. 36 ff.

The Land of Saints

Sections 4, 5, and latter half of 6. Adamnán and his guide come first to the Land of Saints, "a land fruitful, shining." Therein are divers companies of persons, clad in cloaks of white linen, and with white hoods on their heads. The saints from the east of the world form a company apart in the east of that Land; those from the other three quarters are similarly arranged. The Lord is face to face with them in the south-east, but a crystal veil is between Him and them, so that they cannot see Him distinctly. To the south is a golden portico, through which the saints behold the Host of Heaven, but there is no veil between them. The Land is surrounded by a circle of fire. Those who are in the Land of Saints remain there till Doomsday, and after Doom the Judge shall allot them their eternal resting-places in Heaven, where they can contemplate for ever the Face of God without any veil or shadow between Him and them.

The Host of Heaven

First half of section 6, sections 7–10. The Twelve Apostles and the Virgin form an assembly around the Lord. Near the Apostles are patriarchs, prophets, and Christ's disciples. Holy virgins are on Mary's right. All around are infants and children, and the birds of Heaven's family making music, while bright troops of angels are ever in attendance.

The Throne of God is fashioned like a canopied chair. Over it is an arch like an adorned helmet

or a King's diadem. Three zones or circles surround it, and separate it from the Host, "and by no explanation may the nature of them be known.[1] Six thousand thousand, in the shapes of horses and of birds, are about it. On it are perched three stately birds who celebrate the canonical hours. The Throne itself is supported on four columns of precious stones, from which comes a most melodious harmony. Whoever beholds the Deity on His Throne from east or west, from north or south, will see a majestic Countenance seven times brighter than the sun. No human form is discerned, but a fiery mass burning on for ever and ever.

The City of God

Sections 11–13. The City, wherein the Throne is set, is surrounded by seven crystal walls, each one higher than the preceding one. The floor is of white crystal, which the sun turns into blue, and purple, and green, and every other hue. The people of that City, "a family beautiful, very meek, very gentle," are arranged in circles round the Throne, so that their faces are ever towards God. There is a chancel-rail of crystal between each two choirs, adorned with gold and silver and every sort of gem. Between every two "chief companies" there are three precious stones with melodious voices, while the upper halves of them are aflame as flambeaux. Seven thousand angels in the form of candles illuminate the City.

[1] That is to say, they symbolise the Trinity.

The Wandering Souls

Section 14. Those of the world's inhabitants who do not reach that City after death, and to whom a place is not allotted therein until after the Day of Doom, spend their time wandering restlessly over heights and hilltops, and through marshy places, until Judgment, each soul accompanied by its guardian angel. They are prevented from entering the City of God by a veil of fire and a veil of ice,[1] which hang in the chief gateway and keep clashing against each other. The sinners are terrified at the din, but to the heavenly host it sounds like faint music.

The Ascent of the Seven Heavens

Sections 15–20. It is hard for the soul to ascend to the Throne through the Seven Heavens, for at the gate of each is a celestial being as warder.

At the gate of the First Heaven is the Archangel Michael; with him are two youths (or virgins) who scourge the sinner with iron rods.

At the gate of the Second Heaven is the Archangel Uriel, and with him two youths with fiery scourges who smite the sinners on the face and eyes. Before the door is a fiery river. Abersetus is the angel who watches over it. In it he washes the souls of the saints from the degree of sin that cleaves to them, until they become clean. There, too, is a pleasant spring; it cleanses the just, but is only an increase of pain to the sinners.

[1] Is this conception derived from the Vision of Drithelm, where alternate heat and cold form the purgatorial pains?

Before the Third Heaven is a fiery furnace, whose flames rise to a height of 12,000 cubits. The souls of the righteous go through this in the twinkling of an eye, but sinners remain in it for twelve years.

At the door of the Fourth Heaven is a fiery river, and a wall of fire, the breadth of which is 12,000 cubits. The souls of the righteous pass through (the wall ?) in a moment, but sinners are detained therein for twelve years.

At the doors of the Fifth Heaven is a fiery river, with a whirlpool. The righteous pass over it at once, but sinners are whirled about in it for sixteen years. When it is time for their release the angel strikes the water with a rod as hard as stone, on the end of which he lifts up the sinners.

Then Michael brings the souls to the Sixth Heaven. Therein is no pain or punishment, but the souls (both good and evil ?) are illuminated with the brilliancy of precious stones. Then Michael and the Angel of the Trinity, one on each side, usher the soul into the presence of God (in the Seventh Heaven).

Joyful is the welcome accorded to the righteous soul. But if it be unrighteous the Lord bids the angels deliver it into the hands of Lucifer, in order that it may be plunged into the depths of Hell. Then the wretched soul is separated from the family of Heaven and God's presence. It utters a sigh that is heavier than every sigh at coming into the Devil's presence after beholding the delights of Heaven's kingdom. It is then deprived of the guidance of the Archangels, in whose company it had come to Heaven. Next it is swallowed by

twelve fiery dragons, one after the other, till the last lands it in the Devil's mouth. There it experiences the consummation of all evil, in the Devil's presence, for ever and ever.

The Visionary's Return

Section 31. Adamnán's soul is borne back in the twinkling of an eye through the crystal veil to the Land of Saints. He desires to remain there, but the angel bids him return to the body, and preach to men all that has been shown him.

The translations of Whitley Stokes and Boswell follow the L.U. text. There are some slight differences in details and numbers in the other texts, e.g. S.C.C. substitutes two unnamed angels for Abersetus in the Second Heaven, and keeps the sinner in the whirlpool for sixteen years; P. does not mention the number of dragons that swallow the soul. But these differences are seemingly unimportant.

It has already been said that the first half of section 6 is out of place. This is obvious, because Mary, the Apostles, and their companies, are in Heaven itself, whereas the writer has been dealing with the souls in the Land of Saints, and refers to them again in the second half of the same section. The description of the inhabitants of the City of God in sections 12 and 13 is unnecessary and redundant, as the souls in Heaven have already been dealt with at full length. But this faultiness of construction is apparently due to the fact that the sections dealing with the City of God have been

introduced (and possibly altered in the process) from an external source. On this question something will be said hereafter.

As we read *Adamnán* it can be at once perceived that we are moving in a new eschatological atmosphere, and one very different from that of the visions and tales related in the first two chapters. This becomes increasingly clear when certain excisions are made. Sections 11–13, which describe the appearance of the City of God, and its inhabitants, must be omitted. As has just been said, its citizens are the blest in Heaven, who have been previously described in sections 7–10. Furthermore, we are told that the people in the Land of Saints are separated from God and from the Host of Heaven respectively by a veil and by a portico, which do not leave room for the introduction of a further partition in the shape of a sevenfold ring of fortifications. In addition, the sections (15–18) which describe the ascent of souls through the Seven Heavens must be also omitted.

The conception is quite at variance with the rest of the vision. It recognises two classes of souls, and two only—the very good and the very bad; it takes no account of the almost perfect souls in the Land of Saints, or of the not absolutely evil ones which have no rest till Doom, and indeed it would be impossible for either of these two classes to pass through the Seven Heavens and yet reach the abodes in which they are located. The external evidence for excising sections 15–18 is even stronger, and will be dealt with in due course.

Sections 11–13 and 15–18 being omitted, what

is left presents us with the newer eschatological system, here formally put forward for the first time in Irish ecclesiastical literature, and which was destined for the future to represent the beliefs held by the Celtic Church. A sharply defined *fourfold* division is made of the Other-World, viz.: (1) the almost perfect souls in the Lands of Saints; (2) the perfect souls in Heaven; (3) the not very evil, who wander unceasingly, and (4) the utterly lost, who are cast into Hell. Both (1) and (3) will receive their perfect consummation and bliss after the Day of Doom, while all four classes have reached their present location *immediately after death*. It might be urged against this last that (2) and (4) have taken a considerable time, as mortals measure it, to reach their respective abodes. To this it may be answered that the passage describing the ascent through the Seven Heavens has been introduced from outside, and that the writer has dovetailed it into the fourfold conception, not unskilfully indeed, but not without avoiding some discrepancies. These last have been pointed out in the previous paragraph. By doing so, he has avoided giving any description of Hell, for the little he has said about the abode seems to be borrowed from an external non-Irish source.

Thus in the *Vision*, when stripped of its accretions, there are found four classes which presumably may be termed *boni non valde*, *boni valde*, *mali non valde*, *mali valde*. On the exact use of these expressions there has been some loose writing. The belief in a fourfold division of souls is found several times in Irish ecclesiastical literature, but

with very different settings. Sometimes this division is represented as being made *immediately after death*; at other times *only at the Day of Judgment*. With regard to this last it is stated, in the *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday*,[1] a late piece, that at the Judgment the human race will be divided into four assemblies, viz.: the good and the very good, the bad and the very bad. This bald statement is elaborated in the *Tidings of Doomsday*,[2] which is, perhaps, not earlier than the eleventh century. According to it, there are four troops of people at the Day of Doom, viz.: *mali non valde*, who go to Hell after Doom; *mali valde*, who go to Hell at once, without judgment; *boni non valde*, who go to Heaven after Doom; and *boni valde*, who go to Heaven at once, without judgment. Be it noted that this passage, so far as the present writer is aware, affords the only example in printed Irish literature of the application of the four Latin terms to the four divisions of souls *at the Day of Judgment*.

The underlying conception in *Adamnán* is that of a fourfold division of souls made *immediately after death*. Here again it must be noted that the Latin terms are *not* used, nor are they *anywhere* found with reference to this particular fourfold division, except to a certain degree in the *Vision of Tundal*, where express mention is made of the *mali non valde* and of the *boni non valde*. Nevertheless, in Irish ecclesiastical texts of this period (eleventh century and after), either unpublished or lost, it is highly probable that these four Latin

[1] R.C., vol. xxviii, p. 317. [2] R.C., vol. iv, p. 251.

terms were in current use with respect to the souls which had reached their destined abodes at the moment of death.[1]

Something must now be said with respect to the introduction into Irish literature and theology of the fourfold division *immediately after death*, in which the newer eschatology finds expression, and the sources from which it was derived. Professor Zimmer's theory may be briefly stated as follows. The Christian writers of *Adamnán*, of the *Tidings of Doomsday*, etc., were familiar with the Happy Other-World of native legend: it was evidently not the paradise of Christian Scriptures, but why should it not be the resting-place of such as, unworthy to pass at once to heavenly beatitude, might yet look forward to entering after the last Judgment upon the joys of eternal life. Room was thus found in the belief of Christian Ireland for this antique Elysium, to correspond to which a provisional Hell was also imagined, and the fourfold division of the human race after death was complete.[2]

But Zimmer's theory is open to criticism on several points. In the first place it can be urged that he draws no distinction between the fourfold division conceived of as occurring *immediately after death*, and that occurring *only at the Judgment*. But it is extremely important that this distinction should be borne in mind, for the second of these divisions had no particular eschatological significance, and appears to have come into Ireland either from

[1] For the different theories in Irish ecclesiastical literature of the division of souls, see C.Z., vol. xiv, pp. 191 ff.

[2] Meyer and Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i, p. 225.

the writings of Haymo of Halberstadt, or of these Anglo-Saxon writers who drew upon him. Furthermore, that it was considered necessary for the original thinkers to "imagine" a provisional Hell (*mali non valde*) in order to square with the other three states seems a very forced and artificial process on their part. And it must be remembered that the state of the wandering souls in *Adamnán* (who = *mali non valde*) was very far indeed from partaking of the nature of Hell, provisional or otherwise; in reality it affords the first instance in Irish literature of a definitely purgatorial sphere, in which souls must remain till Doom, after which they would be allotted a place in Heaven. For the outstanding feature of the newer eschatological system is, that it introduces the conception of a distinct purgatorial state (though the word *purgatóir* does not occur until a later period), as opposed to the Hell-Purgatory conception which prevailed in the earlier period; while at the same time it introduced a paradisaical state in which were accommodated those who were not good enough to go to Heaven at once, but who were deemed far too good to be placed with the *mali non valde*.

The following theory may be put forward with regard to the method and reason for the introduction of the new eschatological views. The change was due in a certain degree to the influence of the *Imrama*. As has been shown in the previous chapter, these voyage-tales contained descriptions of islands which, although conceived of by the writers as lying in a terrestrial ocean, yet possess

Other-World characteristics, while their inhabitants are either not good enough for Heaven, or too good for Hell, and each seems to have paved the way for the addition of two new abodes in the Unseen.

But the introduction of the new eschatology was mainly a result of the change that was taking place in the Irish Church at this period, a change that culminated in the Reformation in the twelfth century. The Very Rev. H. J. Lawlor has pointed out [1] that before the eleventh century ended forces were at work in Ireland which prepared the way for a new order of things. In the seventh and eighth centuries there was a goodly, and on the whole an increasing, body of scholars in Ireland. The domination of the Norsemen seriously checked this for a period. But in the tenth, and especially in the eleventh, century there was a notable increase in the number of scholars who tended more and more to congregate at special centres of learning, such as Armagh and Clonmacnois. Furthermore, the defeat of the Danes (1014) removed the barrier which had hindered communication between Ireland and the Continent. Scholars came to Ireland from England, and from farther afield, to pursue their studies; while Irish students and monks made their way to the Continent. All this promoted a revival of learning and a consequent influx of new ideas, with the ultimate result that in the twelfth century a radical Reformation took place, by which the Irish Church was brought into conformity, in certain points, with the Churches in England and on the Continent.

[1] Lawlor, *Bernard's Life of Malachy*, pp. xvi ff.

This Reformation must obviously have operated in more ways than one. The principal achievement was the remodelling of the hierarchical system and the introduction of the Roman Office. But, as Dean Lawlor suggests, it may have produced changes in other directions—and so it did, for it brought in a new eschatological system which completely ousted the older one, and in which a place was found for a definite purgatorial state. The revival of learning, which preceded and led up to this Reformation, took place in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and it is just about that period in which we find the documents which at first adumbrate, and then state clearly, a belief in a fourfold division of the Other-World.

This new eschatological conception would appear to have derived its formal fourfold shape from the *Vision of Drithelm*, as recorded by Bede, and from the writings of other Anglo-Saxon divines. Nor must the influence of the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great be forgotten, as in them the doctrine of a purgatorial state was set forth clearly. The advanced, or reform, party in the Irish Church would naturally urge the acceptance, not indeed of *beliefs* altogether new, for the Irish Church had had a purgatorial theory prior to the tenth century, though it seems to have known nothing of a separate purgatorial state, but of the new *form* which such beliefs should take, a form, again, new as regards Ireland, but well known and long established in the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Churches in Britain.

Thus the unknown writer of *Adamnán* was an exponent of the new ideas, which may well have

been those of Adamnán himself, and used his vision as a vehicle for the propagation of the same in Ireland. But in its construction he made use of an apocryphon, why, we cannot say, as it seems to have introduced conceptions incompatible with those of a fourfold state ; this piece may be entitled *The Seven Heavens*, and as it represents in our vision sections 15–20, and possibly 11–13, the reason for the excision of these becomes obvious. On this apocryphon, and its relation to *Adamnán* and to other Irish texts, something must be said, the more as it had a marked influence, directly or indirectly, on the ecclesiastical literature of mediæval Ireland.

In the *Revue Bénédictine* for July 1907,[1] Dom de Bruyne published some Priscillianist fragments in Latin from a Reichenhau MS. of the eighth or ninth century. One of these, that printed on pp. 323–4, will concern us here ; Dr. M. R. James, who first drew attention to its importance in relation to Irish ecclesiastical literature in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. xx, p. 15, considers that it and the other pieces came from a Celtic workshop.

This piece, referred to hereafter as R.B., which is written in most ungrammatical Latin, is fragmentary at the beginning, and it is impossible to say how much is lost ; it appears, however, to be complete at the end. The piece in its entirety was a homily against sinners, and the writer has incorporated in it an account of the soul's ascent through the Seven Heavens, not, however, with the object of preserving an apocryphon, but in order to

[1] Pp. 318 ff.

emphasise the various punishments meted out to the sinful soul during its ascent, culminating with its being cast into Hell. It will be noticed that the souls of the righteous are only mentioned once, and that nothing at all is said about their welcome in the Seventh of the Heavens. The piece is entirely devoted to the progress and punishment of the sinner.

The fragment is printed in two paragraphs. The opening sentence has some reference to the dew, the connection of which cannot now be understood. Then it describes the Third Heaven, Abottem, the account of the first two being lost. In this is a fiery furnace, through which the righteous pass in a moment, but sinners are retained therein for twelve years.

The Fourth Heaven, Jothiam, has a fiery river and a fiery wall. In the former sinners remain for twelve years, and its flames ascend to the Fifth Heaven (which is unnamed. The text has run two Heavens into one).

The Sixth Heaven, Seloth, has a wheel which the angel Tartaruch causes to revolve with iron rods. The sinner is bound on this, and tormented for twelve years. A hundred sparks proceed from the wheel, each of which weighs a hundred pounds, and burns a hundred souls.

The Seventh Heaven is named Theruch. There the Lord sits on a precious stone, from which come light and fire. He judges the sinner, and hands him over to the angel Tartaruch, who plunges him into Hell. That is, a city with walls of red-hot iron, and twelve towers, with a dragon on each, twelve pains, and twelve fiery scourges.

The second paragraph mainly consists of denunciations against various classes of sinners. But it seems to contain apocryphal reminiscences, for it speaks of Hell as "civitas lacrimis, ubi draco antiquos, ubi leonis et draconis interficient impiis et peccatoris."

Now in Irish we have descriptions of the Seven Heavens, and the ascent of souls through them, in all four texts of the *Vision of Adamnán*, in the modern version of the *Ever-New Tongue*, and in at least two other places. From a comparison of these it is clear that the account of the Seven Heavens as given in R.B. in an epitomised form represents an apocryphon, a version of which was current in mediæval Ireland.

There is one passage in a text which affords us a further, and most interesting, proof of this. The L.B. scribe of the *Vision of Adamnán* is, of course, writing in Irish. But, after the manner of other Irish scribes, he occasionally, and for no particular reason, introduces a little Latin. He is describing the scene in the Seventh Heaven, where the Lord judges and condemns the soul of the sinner, and relates for us its condemnation in a mixture of Irish and Latin. I leave the Latin as it is, and translate the Irish. The passage runs thus: "*Et dixit* to the angels of Heaven, *Hanc animam multo peccantem angelo Tartari tradite, et demergat eam in infernum.* Drag with you, angels of Heaven, this vicious soul, and hand it over to Lucifer," etc. Compare with this the parallel passage in the epitomised version in R.B.: "*Dominus judicat de illo homo peccator, et tradatur hunc ad angelum Tartarucho.*

Et angelum dimergit eum in infernum." Can we doubt, from a comparison of the two passages, that the Irish scribe actually had before him an extended text of an apocryphon, of which the R.B. version is an epitome, or else that he had consulted such so recently that portions of it remained in his mind!

There is a slight but interesting difference between the two. The L.B. text has *angelo Tartari*, whereas the R.B. text reads, more correctly, *ad angelum Tartarucho*. Now the angelic name Tartaruch is known to us from other sources. It appears to be in reality an adjective ταρταροῦχος = keeper of Hell, but occurs as a proper name in the Ethiopic version of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, in the Latin text of the *Vision of Paul*, and is found in an abbreviated form Taruch in the *Revelation of John*. The L.B. scribe must have had a text before him in which the more easily understood phrase *angelo Tartari*, the angel of Tartarus, had been substituted for the puzzling name Tartaruch.

The R.B. fragment is, as we have said, a bare epitome of an apocryphon, a version of which was current in Ireland. But it does not seem to represent the actual text read in Irish ecclesiastical circles. Though there are numerous points of connection, yet the differences between the R.B. fragment and all the Irish versions known to the present writer are so marked that one is driven to believe that the source from which the Irish writers derived their matter was a Latin text of the *Seven Heavens*, which varied in certain respects from that represented by R.B. I shall briefly indicate the principal differences.

(1) R.B. mentions saints only once, whereas the Irish versions speak of them in connection with each Heaven. This might be explained by the fact that the R.B. writer is delivering a homily against sinners, and so is primarily concerned with such.

(2) In R.B. the Lord is seated in the Seventh Heaven on a precious stone, from whence come light and heat. There is no mention of this in the Irish versions, except that in section 7 of *Adamnán* (before the part dealing with the Seven Heavens is reached) it is said that His throne is supported on four singing columns of precious stone. Also in section 13 (the City of God) there are singing precious stones, the upper half of which are blazing.

(3) R.B. knows nothing of named doors or gates to the Heavens. These occur, generally speaking, in the Irish versions.

(4) In R.B. the punishment of the sinner takes place in the Heaven itself; in the Irish versions at the entrance-door of each.

(5) In the Irish versions the lost soul is first swallowed by twelve dragons, and then cast into the Devil's maw. In some of them he then puts it into the twelve mansions, or rivers, of Hell, the names of which are very corrupt. R.B. describes the sinner as being cast direct into Hell, and so omits the dragons in this connection, as well as the infernal rivers. It alludes, however, to twelve dragons, but places them on the battlements of Hell.

(6) R.B. has in the Sixth Heaven a wheel of punishment, which the angel Tartaruch causes to revolve with iron rods. From it come a hundred

sparks, etc. The Irish versions know nothing of this wheel. *Adamnán* has instead in the Fifth Heaven a whirlpool in a fiery river, out of which an angel lifts souls on the end of a rod. In other Irish versions there is (or is not) a whirlpool, but the angel's rod has a hundred spikes, each of which gives a hundred wounds to the sinner, or else casts a hundred drops of poison on him.

(7) Perhaps the most important difference is this. R.B. has punishment in the Sixth Heaven. All the Irish versions emphatically state that there is no punishment therein, but rather a preparation for being brought into the presence of the Deity.

From all this it may be concluded that the Latin text of the *Seven Heavens* which was in circulation in Ireland, and was read and used by Irish writers, was not that of which R.B. is but an epitome, but was closely related to it. But different versions of this apocryphon may well have been in existence. A parallel is found in the *Apocalypse of Thomas*. Of this three or four versions are extant, but only one of them appears to have been read in Ireland.

It might further be pointed out that the description of the Seven Heavens as found in all four texts of the *Vision of Adamnán* differs in many points from the descriptions in other Irish versions. For example, *Adamnán* has only three angelic names altogether, and no place-names at all: the other Irish versions abound in names of angels, of heavens, of gates and doors, and of infernal rivers. *Adamnán* alludes to the angel's rod, but omits the spikes on it, though these are mentioned in at least two other versions. There are also some minor differences.

But all these can be explained in the following manner. The writer of *Adamnán*, guided by that fine literary instinct that undoubtedly was his, has omitted these names and details, because in his opinion the retention of them would have made his work seem wooden, artificial, and even grotesque. The result is that he has produced a piece of writing which is quite in harmony with the dignity and literary beauty of the remainder of his work. Like Dante, he used pre-existing material, and in his use of it purified it from all grossness, purging away the dross, and preserving the precious metal. For this reason he has been well styled "an Irish precursor" of the Florentine poet.

The question might be here asked: From what source did the writer of *Adamnán* derive his conception of the City of God encircled by seven crystal walls? We would reply: From the apocryphon of the *Seven Heavens*, directly or indirectly. It may be that in that piece, as it existed in its complete form, there stood such an account of the City of God; or it may be that the description of Hell in the R.B. fragment, with its grim walls of red-hot iron, suggested to the writer of *Adamnán* the more pleasing conception of the Celestial City with its walls of crystal, translucent and gleaming.

It might be noted, as a curious fact which we cannot explain, that not one of the descriptions of the Seven Heavens is perfectly constructed; in each of them there is found some flaw. This is true of even so carefully written a document as *Adamnán*. In it there is no explicit mention of the Seventh Heaven, while in the description of the

objects at the door of the Fourth Heaven the phraseology is very confused, just as it is in the corresponding place in R.B.

From internal and external evidence it seems clear that the first portion of the *Vision of Adamnán*, which we have designated by the symbol *Adamnán*, and which represents the original vision, is composite, and contains two sets of ideas which are not merely incompatible but contradictory. This, in our opinion, is not due to the hand of a later writer, but may be attributed to the original author, who, it would seem, was conscious of the discrepancy between the two eschatological systems (i.e. the fourfold division, and the twofold division, of souls) and who ignored it. Possibly he reconciled the two in his own mind in some such way as this. The fairly good and the fairly bad have been disposed of until Doom, when their lots will be changed. But there remain two classes—the almost perfectly good and the perfectly bad—whose lot, in accordance with the eschatological system of a fourfold division of souls immediately after death, must be determined at once. It could be done in the following manner. Both are conducted through the Heavens, in the second of which the slight amount of guilt that clings to the righteous is purged away, and finally both classes are presented to the Deity in order that they may receive their due rewards.

It would have been easy for the unskilled hand of a mere compiler to commit some absurdities when trying to reconcile two contradictory sets of ideas, but the literary genius of the writer

of *Adamnán* saved him from all pitfalls. It is possible, though he does not say it in so many words—and there perhaps we find a slight chink in his armour—that the writer conceived of the Six Heavens as surrounding the Seventh, the City where dwelt the Deity, and that in the crystal wall encircling each of these was set the door through which the souls must pass in their upward progress.

The debt of *Adamnán* to the *Imrama* and to other Irish writings must now briefly be considered. The angels in bird form, and the three stately birds chanting the canonical hours, are features that are met with even as far back as *Bran*. Some of the angels are in the form of horses: both in *Bran* and in *The Sick-bed of Cuchulainn*, wondrous horses are amongst the delights to be found in *Tír Tairngiri*, while a demon horse-race occurs in *Maelduin*. The throne supported on four columns recalls to mind the island supported on four columns of bronze in *Bran*, that resting on one column in *Maelduin* and *Ui Corra*, and the four pillars on which the cat played in the former place. The musical properties of these four columns, as well as of those precious stones which also gave out light, resemble the stone in *Bran*, "from which arises a hundred strains. It sings a strain unto the host through long ages." Kuno Meyer, on p. 39, gives a reference to the melody of the stone of Loch Láig. The Land of Saints surrounded by a wall of fire finds a parallel and a prototype in *Maelduin* in the island of blissful feasters also similarly encircled. It is possible, too, that in the great arch over the Throne of God, and in the crystal

veil between Him and the Land of Saints we have echoes of features found in the *Imrama*.

In conclusion, something must now be said regarding the Fire of Doom, and its efficacy. It will be remembered that in the earlier period it was invested with purgatorial qualities, as it would cleanse away at the last day the trivial sins and imperfections which marred the almost perfect souls.

But from about the tenth century on, a different conception of it and its effects is found. In the *Tidings of the Resurrection*[1] (end of eleventh and beginning of twelfth centuries) it is said that at the Day of Doom "Heaven and earth will be shaken, and all the elements that are therein. They will be dissolved and melted by the heat of the Fire of Doom; but all those, after being smelted and purified by the Fire, will be cast into a form more beautiful by far than the form in which they existed. The glowing Fire of Doom will burn all the sinners and the impious. But it will do no hurt to the bodies of the righteous, for that Fire will be like a soothing rain to the saints, but it will consume the sinners." In like strain runs a passage from the *Leabhar Breac*[2]: "The whole world, from the rising to the setting of the sun, shall be in one fiery blaze. Sinners shall be weeping and crying, lamenting and grieving, throughout that flame, while it will not at all hurt the righteous." Similarly, the *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday*[3] (probably not earlier than the thirteenth century, and possibly later)

[1] R.C., vol. xxv, p. 235.
[2] Hogan (Todd Lecture Series, vol. vi, p. 33).
[3] R.C., vol. xxviii, p. 315.

states that the angels, and the souls of the saints and of the righteous, will be saved like a fish in water, so that the Fire of Doom does not hurt them, while the lost "will be a thousand years in the eternal Fire of Doom, for that is the length and period of the Day of Judgment," and then go to Hell. According to the *Tidings of Doomsday*,[1] which is perhaps not earlier than the eleventh century, it is said that sinners will be sent to inhabit Hell after having been a thousand years in the Fire of Doom, "for that is the length of Doomsday, as the commentators on the Holy Canon declare."

From these quotations it is clear that the conception of the Fire of Doom has undergone a radical change. As a result of the introduction into Irish eschatology of a distinct purgatorial state, the Fire has been entirely divested of its purifying qualities. It has, in consequence, no effect at all on the righteous, while with regard to the sinners it merely serves as a preliminary punishment for them before they are cast into Hell. The first-quoted document, in its description of the effect of the Fire on Heaven and earth, shows an acquaintance with such Anglo-Saxon writings as Aelfric's *Homilies* and Cynewulf's poems, *Elene*, *Christ*, and *Phœnix*.

Note

Miss Byrne has drawn my attention to a rather early use of the word *purgatóir*, interesting also, as

[1] R.C., vol. iv, p. 253. The same statement is made in the *Fifteen Tokens*, p. 319.

it is applied to the Fire of Doom. It is found in a Poem on the Last Day, attributed to St. Columcille, and printed in C.Z., vol. viii. It says in stanza 40: "The true fire of Purgatory (*purgatóir*) will destroy men, women, and children. High will be the flame, and fierce the blaze, over the world." Farther, it is said that its fire will pierce, and its ice cut, the sinners. This is apparently the only instance of the notion of *coldness* being attached to the Fire of Doom. Obviously the writer borrowed the idea from conceptions of Purgatory. Various classes of sinners are tormented therein, and these are called "the troop of Hell." Later on, mention is made of "those He will call and cleanse," i.e. the *boni non valde*, who need to be cleansed of slight defilements before they can be admitted to Heaven. Thus in this curious document the writer has combined the earlier and later theories of the effects of the Fire of Doom, and this fact alone, not to speak of the use of the word *purgatóir*, would be an argument for the late date of the piece.

Chapter V

THE VISION OF TUNDAL

Date of the Vision. Synopsis. What can be gleaned about the Author. King Cormac MacCarthy. St. Bernard's *Life* of St. Malachy of Armagh.

THE Vision of Tundal is one of the best-known and most influential of mediæval visions. It was seen—for apparently a substratum of truth underlies the phantasy—in 1148, and committed to writing at Ratisbon early in 1149.[1] It will first of all be necessary to give a fairly long synopsis of it, and for this purpose we have made use of the Latin text in A. Wagner, *Visio Tnugdali Lateinisch und Altdeutsch* (Erlangen, 1882), and have followed, for the most part, his division into sections, to which, however, we have prefixed numbers to facilitate reference. The writer of it was a diligent student of the Holy Scriptures, for his composition is permeated with Biblical language, either as direct quotations, or indirectly; some of these have been reproduced in the synopsis in italics, which will enable the reader to form some slight conception of the degree to which Biblical phraseology is employed.

In an Introduction the person who committed the vision to writing, an Irish monk from Cashel named Marcus, tells us that he did so, turning it out of Irish into Latin, at the request of an Abbess G. In it he mentions certain historical facts with

[1] For the rather intricate question of date, see *Studies in the Vision of Tundal* (P.R.I.A., vol. xxxvii, sect. C, pp. 92 ff.).

the object of establishing a date, and then proceeds to give some particulars with respect to Ireland, and in the course of this makes a statement on its ecclesiastical government, the importance of which has not hitherto been fully realised. This will be dealt with in its proper place.

Tundal

Section 1. He then says that in the city of Cashel there lived a nobleman named Tundal, young in years, gently nurtured, not unskilled in war, but who neglected his soul's salvation and the duty he owed to the Church. When on a visit to a friend in Cork he fell ill, and apparently lay dead for three days, except that some little warmth was perceived in his heart. At the expiration of the period he came to life again, and then related his experiences.

The Departure of the Soul

Section 2. As soon as the Soul of Tundal had put off the body she was surrounded by a host of *unclean spirits* (Matt. x. 1), who abused her and threatened to drag her to the *unquenchable fire* (Matt. iii. 12). But God *sent his angel* (1 Chron. xxi. 15) to meet her, who came from afar like a brightly shining star; and finally appeared as a youth with a *form beautiful above the sons of men* (Ps. xliv. 3 (Vulg.)); this was her guardian angel. He comforted her, and having put the demons to flight bade her follow him.

The First Punishment of Homicides

Section 3. The angelic guide led Tundal's Soul to a valley filled with burning coals, over which was an immense iron lid. On this a swarm of souls was descending, and were there roasted, until they became liquid, when they were strained through the lid, and in the glowing coals beneath were *renewed again* (Heb. vi. 6) for further torment. This was the first punishment of parricides and homicides, who were afterwards led to greater pains.

The Punishment of the Crafty and Treacherous

Section 4. Next they came to a mountain, across which lay a narrow path, on one side of which was fire, on the other ice and snow, and wind mingled with hail. Demons armed with forks caught the souls, and tossed them alternately into heat and cold.

The Punishment of the Proud

Section 5. After this they reached a valley, the profundity of which the Soul could not perceive, though she could hear the roar of a fire, and the wailing of a multitude suffering torment. Across this lay a plank, a thousand paces in length, but only one foot in breadth. Many essayed this crossing, but all fell off except a certain priest who had gone on pilgrimage (*presbyter peregrinus*). The Soul feared to attempt the passage, saying, "*Who shall deliver me from the* way *of this death?*" (Rom. vii. 24); but the Angel helped her across.

The Punishment of the Covetous

Section 6. Next they came to a Beast, which in size surpassed all the mountains that Tundal had ever seen. Its eyes were like fiery hills, and its mouth seemed as if it could contain nine thousand men. Its jaws were kept agape by two men, who were thrust like props between them, one of whom was standing on his feet, the other upside down. From this threefold opening came *unquenchable fire* (Matt. iii. 12), and the sound of the wailing of a great multitude in its belly. Demons armed with whips were compelling souls to enter its mouth. The Angel told the Soul that the Beast was named Acheron, and that the two men between its jaws were Fergus and Conall. At this he disappeared and the demons constrained the Soul to enter the Beast. Therein she endured the ferocity of dogs, bears, lions, serpents, and monsters, the blows of demons, the *heat of fire* (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 12), the asperity of cold, smell of sulphur, cloudiness of the eyes, floods of burning tears, abundance of tribulation, and *gnashing of teeth* (Matt. viii. 12). After enduring these she suddenly found herself outside the Beast, with the Angel standing beside her.

The Punishment of Sacrilegeous Thieves and Robbers

Section 7. He bade the Soul follow him, and she arose with difficulty, trying to *strengthen her feeble steps* (cf. Isa. xxxv. 3; Heb. xii. 12). But *the Angel of the Lord touched* (Judges vi. 21) her, and strengthened her. Then they reached a stormy

lake, the waves of which rose up and hid the sky in their tossing. Across this lay a bridge, two miles long, and only one palm in breadth, all studded with sharp spikes. Underneath this fire-breathing monsters gathered, in order to devour the souls that fell off. The Soul beheld on the bridge another Soul bearing sheaves of corn.[1] Tundal had then to lead across a wild cow, which he had stolen in life from his godfather. With great difficulty he induced the cow to follow him, and at the middle of the bridge he and the other Soul *met together*, but not like *Mercy and Truth* (Ps. lxxxv. 10). Neither would give way to the other, and they stood there weeping for a long time, until Tundal's soul found herself on the farther side.

The Punishment of Gluttons and Fornicators, both Lay and Monastic

Section 8. Then they arrived at the guest-house of Phristin, which was round like an oven in which loaves are baked, while from it burst forth a flame which burnt up all the souls for the space of a thousand paces. Near the house stood executioners armed with axes, knives, augers, sickles, spades, and other implements, with which they split and dismembered souls. Tundal's Soul was unwilling to draw near, but was compelled to do so. She was delivered from the external flame, but was cut in pieces by the executioners, and then hurled into the flames within. After a while she

[1] According to the Middle-English version, these were tithe-sheaves which this Soul had stolen in life (A. Wagner, *Tundale*: *Das Mittelenglische Gedicht* (Halle, 1893), p. 35).

found herself outside the house, and the Angel appeared to her again.

In the course of a long discourse on the justice and mercy of God, he tells the Soul that no one is free from sin, not even the child of a night old. In reply to her question as to why the righteous are led to the infernal regions he replies as follows: "If this perplexeth thee, that the righteous, who do not suffer these pains, are yet led to see them, for this reason it is done that when they see the torments from which they have been delivered by the Divine grace they may glow more ardently with love and praise for their Creator. Contrariwise, the souls of sinners who are adjudged worthy of eternal punishment are first led to the glory of the saints, in order that the sight of the rewards which they have wilfully spurned may be a source of greater grief to them when they come to their punishment, and that that glory which might have been theirs may be recalled to memory by them to increase their pain. For no punishment is more grievous than that of being shut out from the companionship of the Divine majesty *and of the holy angels* (Luke ix. 26). And for this reason that priest, whom thou didst see the first to cross the bridge in safety, was led to the punishment in order that at the sight of them he might burn more ardently with love towards Him *who hath called him unto glory*" (1 Pet. v. 10).

The Punishment of those of the Religious Order who lived Unchastely

Section 9. Next they beheld a Beast, with two feet and two wings, a very long neck, an iron

beak, and talons of iron, while fire emerged from its mouth. This Beast was sitting on a frozen pond. It used to devour souls, and when they were reduced to nothing in its belly it would bring them forth on the ice, where they were renewed again for torment. All those who finally reached the pond became filled with little beasts like vipers, which tried to make their way out of the bodies, but were unable to do so, because *in their tails they had many stings* (Rev. ix. 10 indirectly) which were curved like fishhooks. Also at the end of their fingers and other members the souls had heads of beasts, which used to devour them, while in their mouths were living tongues, which devoured their palate and windpipe. Some of this torment the Soul too endured, but when she reached the surface of the pond the Angel rescued her.

The Punishment of those who heap Sin upon Sin (cf. Isa. xxx. 1)

Section 10. After this the Soul and her conductor followed a steeply descending path until they reached a valley full of forges. The Angel told her that this tormentor was named Vulcan, "through whose invention many have been ruined." As they drew nearer demon blacksmiths seized the Soul with fiery pincers, and hurled her into a *burning, fiery*, smelting-*furnace* (Dan. iii. 6), then, blowing with bellows, they *tried* her as *silver* is wont to be *tried* (cf. Ps. xii. 6, and Ezek. xxii. 20–22), until she and the other souls were reduced to a state like

that of water. Then the demons pierced them with iron tridents, and placing them on an anvil kept hammering them until some twenty or thirty or a hundred souls were welded into a single lump. This they then threw to other tormentors, who caught it in their pincers before it reached the ground, and then melted and hammered it in like wise. After a long time the Soul's *Advocate* (1 John ii. 1) drew her from the burning coals and consoled her, telling her that there were greater evils from which she would be freed. He added, "ALL those whom thou hast seen hitherto await the judgment of God; but those who are now in Hell *have been judged already* (John iii. 18 (R.V.)), for as yet thou hast not come to the depths of Hell."

HELL

Section 11. As they went on together, intolerable cold, darkness out of comparison to what had hitherto been experienced, *tribulation and anguish* (Rom. ii. 9), came all together upon the Soul. She asked her guide the reason for this, but without replying he disappeared *out of her sight* (Luke xxiv. 31). Hearing a great noise, she looked around, and perceived a square opening, like that of a cistern, from which arose and descended again a column of stinking flame. In this was a vast host of devils and souls ascending and descending with it. Some demons armed with hooks rushed at her, and threatened to drag her into the pit of Hell, but the Angel reappeared, and put them to flight.

The Prince of Darkness

Section 12. He then bade the Soul look into the pit, and there she beheld the Devil in torment. He was as black as a raven, and had *the form* (Phil. ii. 7) of a man's body from head to his feet, except that he had many hands and a tail. That fearful monster had no less than a thousand hands, each of which was about a hundred cubits long and ten wide. Each hand bore twenty fingers, each of which was a hundred palms long and ten wide. And their nails, which were of iron, were longer than soldiers' lances, while on the feet were as many claws. He had a beak very long and thick, and his tail was rough and long, and all furnished very very sharp spikes for the tormenting of souls. This dread *Spectacle* (1 Cor. iv. 9) lay prone upon an iron crate; under this were placed burning coals which a countless number of devils were blowing up with bellows. Around him stood a vast throng of souls and devils. The Devil was fettered and bound by every limb with bonds of brass and iron. As he tossed about in agony he turned himself in excess of rage from one side to the other, and extending all his hands to the multitude of souls filled them with these, and squeezed them, as a thirsty rustic squeezes out bunches of grapes, so that every soul was torn and wounded. Then exhaling his breath he blew and scattered all the souls to the different parts of Gehenna, and straightway the pit belched forth its column of flame. And when he drew in his breath he brought back to himself all the scattered souls; these fell into his

mouth and were devoured by him.[1] Whoever escaped his hands he lashed with his tail, and thus the wretched Beast lay ever, tormenting and being tormented.

Amongst the souls in Hell the Soul saw many whom she had known in life. The Angel then said to her: "These are they who *have been judged already* (John iii. 18 (R.V.)). First of all they suffer those lesser pains, which thou hast already seen, and then they are led to these from which no man, who once hath entered, is able to depart."

The Punishment of the "mali non valde"

Section 13. As they proceeded on their way the darkness and stench vanished and light appeared. Finally, they came to a high wall, at the foot of which, on the side from which they were advancing, was a multitude of men and women enduring *rain and wind* (2 Kings iii. 17), hunger and thirst (2 Cor. xi. 27), but they *had light* (cf. John viii. 12). These were the *Mali non valde*, who suffered here for some years, and were then led to rest.

[1] Non-Irish parallels to this are quoted in the next chapter. But a curious Irish parallel is found in the story of King Brandub. He had given a wether (*ludarium*) in charity to a leper. Shortly after he fell sick, and had a vision, in which he seemed to be borne to Hell (*infernum*). All its monsters came openmouthed to meet him. There was one monster, larger and more ferocious than the others, who drew the King to it by its breath, and almost swallowed him. He was saved, however, by St. Maedoc, who smote the monster on the head with his staff, and also thrust into its mouth the wether which Brandub had given in charity. (Plummer, *Vitae SS.*, vol. ii, pp. 150, 303; *Irish Lives*, vol. ii, pp. 179, 210).

The Field of Joy, and the Fountain of Life and the Repose of the "non valde boni"

Section 14. Next *they came unto a gate, which opened to them of his own accord* (Acts xii. 10). Within was a fair field, flower-bespangled, redolent with perfume, in which was a throng of joyful souls, and there, too, was *the fountain of life* (Jer. ii. 13; Rev. vii. 17), and xxi. 6). This was the abode of the *Boni non valde*, who did not as yet merit entering Heaven.

The Kings Donacus and Conchober

Section 15. Therein the Soul was astonished to see the two kings, Donacus and Conchober, who had been enemies in life. The Angel said to her: "They repented of their enmity before they died King Conchober lay ill for a long time, and *vowed a vow* (Gen. xxviii. 20) that if he lived he would become a monk. King Donacus was bound in fetters for many years, and *gave* all he possessed *to the poor* (Ps. cxii. 9). But do thou relate all this to the living."

King Cormac MacCarthy

Section 16. A little farther on they beheld a house large and round, the walls of which were constructed of *gold and silver*, and all manner of *precious stones* (1 Cor. iii. 12); it had neither doors nor windows, but all who would might enter in. Therein was a golden seat, covered with silk, on which sat King Cormac. Countless persons came bearing

gifts, while *priests and levites* (1 Kings viii. 4), vested as if for Mass, adorned the house with chalices of gold and silver, and with ivory pyxes. The Soul did not recognise amongst these any of those who had been the king's attendants while he had been in the body; but the Angel told her that these were the poor and pilgrims to whom he had lavishly dispensed alms. Suddenly the house became dark, and the king arose and went out weeping. Then the Soul saw him standing in a fire up to his waist, while from the waist up he was clothed in sackcloth. The Angel said to her, "Daily for *the space of three hours* (Acts v. 7) he suffereth. He endureth fire up to his middle because he defiled the sacrament of matrimony; and from the middle up he endureth sackcloth because he bade men slay a certain nobleman hard by [the church of] St. Patrick, and broke his oath. Except for these all his sins have been forgiven him."

The Glory of Married Persons

Section 17. When they ascended a little they beheld a wall of silver, beyond which they passed, but how the Soul knew not. There they beheld in a flowery mead throngs of men and women *clothed in white raiment* (Rev. iii. 5, iv. 4) like that of freshly fallen snow struck by the rays of the sun, who were chanting *Gloria tibi, Deus Pater, gloria tibi, Fili, gloria tibi, Spiritus Sancte.* These were persons who had kept their marriage-vows, and who had ruled their households well, and had given to the poor. Concerning these the Angel said:

"*These persons looking for the blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the Great God* (Titus ii. 13 (Vulg.)) are comforted in such a rest." Then he bade the Soul ascend, and see the greater rewards of the saints.

The Glory of Martyrs and Continent Persons

Section 18. Then they came to a wall of gold, beyond which they also passed as before. Beyond it were seats encrusted with gems and covered with silk, in which sat men and women *clothed in white robes* (Rev. vii. 9, xviii. 12, xix. 8, 14), and wearing golden crowns. Before them were bookstands, on which lay books written in letters of gold. These were the martyrs, and those who had remained continent.

The Glory of Monks and Nuns

Section 19. As the Soul looked around she saw tents and pavilions constructed of *purple and fine linen* (Luke xvi. 19), and *of gold and silver and silk* (Rev. xviii. 12), in which she heard persons playing on *stringed instruments and organs*, *timbrels* also, and *harps* (Ps. cl. 3–5). Over their heads hung down chains of *most pure gold* (3 Kings, vi. 21 (Vulg.)); 1 Kings (A.V.), intermingled with silver rods, from which were suspended golden *cups* and *vials*, *cymbals* and *bells*, *lilies* and *bowls* (Exod. xxviii. 33, xxxvii. 16, 17; Ps. cl. 5; Rev. v. 8). In and out amongst these were flying golden-winged angels, whose flight between the chains and rods caused the sweetest music. Here the Soul was not permitted to enter.

The Defenders and Constructors of Churches

Section 20. Next the Soul beheld a vast tree, with leaves and flowers, bearing many kinds of fruit. On its branches perched birds of every species, while from the earth beneath sprang up lilies and roses, and fragrant herbs. Underneath it sat men and women in cells of gold and ivory; each of these had a golden crown on the head, and a sceptre of gold in the hand, while they were clad like monks. The tree was a type of Holy Church, while the people were the defenders and constructors of churches.

The Glory of Virgins, the Nine Orders of Angels, etc.

Section 21. Then they came to a high wall built of various precious stones, that is, crystal, *chrysolite*, *beryl*, *jasper*, *jacinth*, *emerald*, *sapphire*, onyx, *topaz*, *sardius*, *chrysoprasus*, *amethyst*, turquoise, and garnet (Rev. xxi. 19–20), with gold for mortar. *They scaled the wall* (Joel ii. 7 (Vulg.)) and found themselves in the presence of the nine orders of angels, the white-robed army of martyrs (*Te Deum*), the goodly fellowship of the prophets (*ibid.*), the glorious company of the apostles (*ibid.*); and above all they beheld Him who is the *Angels' food* (Ps. lxxviii. 25), and the life of all things. From this place they could view, not only all the glory which they had hitherto beheld, but the punishments as well, and could see the earth's orb "as it were under a single ray of the sun."

St. Ruadan of Lorrha

Section 22. As the Soul stood there St. Ruadan, Confessor, came to her, and embracing her in *the bowels of charity* (cf. Col. iii. 12, 14) said: "I am Ruadan, thy patron, to whom thou art by law a debtor for (the fees for) interment" (*cui jure debitor es sepulture*).

St. Patrick and the Bishop

Section 23. Then she saw St. Patrick with a company of bishops, amongst whom she perceived four well known to her, namely, Celestine, Archbishop of Armagh, and Malachias his successor, Christian, Bishop of Louth, and Nemias of Cloyne. Hard by was an empty seat, wonderfully adorned; this, the Angel told her, was for one who had not yet departed from the body.[1]

The Soul's Return

Section 24. After this the Angel told the Soul that she must again put on her body, and warned her to live a better life. She was most unwilling to return, but in less than a moment she was oppressed by the mass of her flesh. Then when Tundal had recovered his health he gave away all his goods to the poor, and, placing the sign of the cross on his garment, *he preached the Word of God* (Acts xiii. 5).

Tundal, the hero of the vision, may well have been an historical character, though nothing is

[1] This seat was probably intended for St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who died in 1153.

known of him. His name has been conjectured to be the Irish Tnuthgál or Tnudgál. But concerning that much more interesting character, Marcus, the author of the piece, a few items of information can be gleaned which enable us to put together a conjectural and fragmentary account of him and his movements. For these we are dependent on one external source (the German version of Alber), and on material in the Vision itself. There are statements in the latter, which are either related of Tundal or told to him by the Angel, which clearly are to be referred to Marcus himself. For example, considering the sort of life he led, Tundal was hardly the man to have been on friendly terms with four bishops! Thus in this passage,[1] as in several others, Marcus is plainly vouchsafing autobiographical details, and as such we shall treat them.

In heaven Tundal meets with St. Ruadan, the patron saint of Lorrha, in the extreme north of co. Tipperary, who died in 584, by whom he is informed that he is bound to be buried in his cemetery. (*Ruadanus, patronus tuus, cui jure debitor es sepulture.*) Why is Ruadan introduced into the story in preference to any other early Irish saint? Obviously because Marcus had some connection with Lorrha; either his family had come from there, or he himself had entered on the religious life in that monastery.

Marcus was a monk, as he styles himself *frater*, and lays the greatest stress on the rewards and punishments meted out to good and bad monks

[1] Wagner, p. 53.

respectively. He may, perhaps, have belonged to the Benedictine Order, for in three places in his Vision he quotes from the rule of St. Benedict.

At some period of his life Marcus became attached to the household of King Cormac MacCarthy; presumably this was at Cashel. From Wagner, p. 43, l. 25, it may be inferred that he was well acquainted with Cormac's personal attendants. It is strange that he puts none of them in Paradise. Between him and that king a close friendship must have sprung up, for underneath all the extravagance of language which Marcus employs,[1] we can catch a note of personal affection, as well as of wistful longing for certain knowledge regarding the salvation of his king. It is to the credit of Marcus that affection and friendship have not blinded him to his lord's faults; he has no hesitation in representing him as suffering purgatorial pains for adultery, and for the treacherous murder of a certain nobleman. With regard to the former charge we know nothing; yet there is a passage in the Life of St. Malachy (p. 22) which, to a certain extent, supports it: "With a daily bath of cold water he quenched the burning lust for evil in his flesh." Of the murder of the nobleman "hard by [the church of] St. Patrick" (*juxta sanctum Patricium*, Wagner, p. 44)[2] by which it would appear that Cormac had violated a pledge of safe-conduct which he had given, a record seems to be contained in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, *s.a.* 1136, "Donnchadh,

[1] Wagner, pp. 42–4.

[2] On this see *Studies in the Vision of Tundal* (P.R.I.A., vol. xxxvii, sect. C, p. 89).

son of Maelseachlainn Ua Faelain fell by Cormac mac Carthaigh by treachery."

Of Cormac's liberality towards pilgrims and Christ's poor, which Marcus records, nothing appears to be known outside the Vision. Yet we may assume that these statements are accurate, and come from the pen of one who was an eye-witness and, perhaps, a dispenser of the king's bounty.

Cormac MacCarthy became King of Desmond in 1124. In 1127 Turlough O'Connor, King of Connaught, invaded Munster, drove out Cormac from his kingdom, and gave it to his brother and enemy Donough MacCarthy (the " King Donacus " of section 15). Cormac therefore fled to Lismore, where he took refuge with Bishop Malchus, or Mael Isa Ua hAinmire, who appears as Archbishop of Cashel in 1110, but who had apparently resigned that See, and betaken himself to his former diocese.

Not long after this Cormac was restored to his kingdom by the arms of Conor O'Brien, King of Thomond (the " King Conchober " of section 15). From this time these two kings became allies, making warlike expeditions together, and to cement the union Cormac married Conor's niece. But Conor proved a false friend, and seems, in his ambition, to have brought about the death of Cormac, who was murdered by his father-in-law, Conor's brother, in 1138. The subsequent history of the two kings, Conor O'Brien and Donough MacCarthy, is given in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, to which Marcus contributes some items which appear to be historical. In 1131 Conor had been severely wounded by a servant, " so that he

was lying in his death-sickness." Is this the long illness referred to by Marcus, who also tells us that during it he vowed to become a monk if he should recover? He died at Killaloe in 1142, "after the victory of penance." Do these words imply that he made some attempt to fulfil his vow? In the same year Donough was taken prisoner by the Deisi, and delivered to Turlough O'Brien, the successor of Conor; he died in prison "in fetters" two years later, so the "many years" of confinement, as recorded by Marcus, appear to be a slight exaggeration.

Of his charitable actions towards the poor nothing appears to be known outside the allusion in the *Vision*, though no doubt the information is perfectly correct. Why has Marcus placed in Paradise the two men who were the unbrotherly enemy, and the treacherous friend, of his dearly loved lord? Was it because he felt that Cormac, out of the Christian charity that was his, would have freely forgiven them both? Or was he actuated by less worthy motives? We cannot tell.[1]

Of the movements of Marcus after the death of Cormac nothing is known, but it may be assumed that he remained at Cashel, and had his conversation with Tundal in that city some time in 1148. But the desire for wandering came upon him, as it had come upon many an Irish monk. He left Cashel, and ultimately reached Ratisbon. On the way he would

[1] Lawlor, *St. Bernard's Life of St. Malachy*, pp. liii, lv, 21, 43; Lawlor, *Notes on St. Bernard's Life of St. Malachy* (P.R.I.A., vol. xxxv, p. 251; Friedel and Meyer, *La Vision de Tondale*, pp. iv-v; *Annals of the Four Masters* (Ed. J. O'Donovan).

seem to have stopped at Clairvaux, where he found St. Bernard busily engaged in writing his *Life of St. Malachy of Armagh*. Owing to his personal knowledge of many of the actors and incidents in the reform of Romanising movement, he would have been welcomed by that saint; indeed, this may have been the reason why he went to Clairvaux.

The evidence in favour of his having visited St. Bernard, and of his having read and given some assistance in the compilation of the *Life*, may briefly be summed up thus: (1) He follows St. Bernard in his use of the word *metropolitanus*, and of *civitas* in an ecclesiastical sense. (2) The error about the movements of Pope Eugenius III after leaving Clairvaux must have been communicated to him by the saint. (3) He says (p. 5) that St. Bernard *transcribit*—"is composing"—the *Life*; the use of the present tense would imply that he actually saw the *Life* in process of composition. According to one piece of evidence the *Life* was *commenced* immediately after Malachy's death (November 2, 1148), and *finished* in the beginning of 1149. (4) In the *Life*, sect. 47, an anecdote is told, into which Nehemiah, Bishop of Cloyne, is introduced, while a little farther on, in sect. 49, the account is given of a miracle worked in the town of Cashel by St. Malachy. Were these two items of information vouchsafed by Marcus, and had St. Bernard reached this point in his work when he received a visit from him? (5) The *Life* is full of Scripture passages and quotations: so is the *Vision of Tundal*, as we have endeavoured to show to a slight degree. (6) In the *Life* (p. 125) it is said that none of the usual

signs of death were apparent in the corpse of Malachy the Saint ; it is a significant fact that these were expressly said to be present in the corpse of Tundal the sinner.

After a presumed short stay at Clairvaux Marcus continued his journey, and finally arrived at Ratisbon, where he committed his Vision to writing early in 1149. For the mention of his arrival at this city we are indebted to the Bavarian priest Alber, who, *circa* 1190–1200, translated the *Vision of Tundal* into Middle High German verse. He had at his disposal some information respecting Marcus not to be found elsewhere. In the introductory portion of his metrical version he says :

" A good monk brought it (the account of the Vision) to the town of Regensburg. Then the path led him to a convent, where there are nuns. It is called after St. Paul. There he wrote it with his own hand, as he had heard it from the lips of a certain person. . . . Now we write it down clearly (i.e. in German) for the sake of the unlearned people, for the edification of the young and old, and in order that those who commanded it to be written, the three ladies Ôtegebe, Heilke, and Gisel, may benefit by it, and after them all those who were ever sinners, be they alive or dead, that they may have their sins forgiven." [1]

Alber does not give the name of the monk who had brought the story to Ratisbon. Evidently he held him to be Marianus Scotus, who had been

[1] Alber's version is printed in Wagner, *Visio Tnugdali*, pp. 120–86. I owe the translation of this passage (p. 122) to Prof. G. Waterhouse.

hospitably received some years before in that very convent of St. Paul. The last in order of the three ladies who ordered Marcus to commit the story to writing, Gisel, is to be identified with the "Abbess G.," at whose particular request, as he tells us himself in the prologue,[1] he wrote the experiences of Tundal. A Deathbook of Obermunster contains, in a hand of the twelfth century, the names of "Gisilda abbatissa," and "Ôtegeba Monacha" of the nunnery of St. Paul of Ratisbon.

The *Vision* was written early in 1149. Presumably Marcus commenced writing it immediately on his arrival at Ratisbon. As it was commenced, though not necessarily finished, before St. Bernard had completed his own work, it would tend to show that the *Vision of Tundal* was committed to writing in the first quarter of 1149. Of the subsequent history of Marcus nothing is known, but it may well be that he spent the remainder of his days in the Benedictine Monastery of St. James at Ratisbon, a house which had benefited by the generosity of his fellow-Munstermen.

[1] Wagner, pp. 3, 4.

Chapter VI

A STUDY OF THE VISION OF TUNDAL

The Twelfth-century Reform Movement. The Synod of Rathbreasail. The Synod of Kells. Eschatology of the Vision. The Sevenfold Structure. The Influence of *Adamnán*. The Vision of Drithelm. The *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great. The Vision of Alberic of Monte Cassino. The Vision of the Boy William. Purgation in Paradise. Other Works Quoted. Marcus's use of Irish Literature. Liturgical Elements. Biblical Versions used in the Vision. Value of the Vision.

IN any study of the *Vision of Tundal*, it will be necessary, first of all, to consider it in its relationship to contemporary ecclesiastical history in Ireland, and to the changes in Church organisation that were taking place therein. In Chapter IV something has already been said regarding the Reformation movement in the Irish Church in the twelfth century. The *Vision of Adamnán* shows the change that was taking place in eschatology prior to that event. The *Vision of Tundal* carries us a long step farther; not only does it present us with the same eschatological theories—to which these are some curious accretions—but it also throws some welcome and unexpected light on the ecclesiastical changes that had occurred in Ireland. One of the main objects of that reformation was to get rid of the monastic system in which the abbot was supreme, the bishop being subject to him, and to substitute for this the system of diocesan episcopacy, in which the bishop was supreme, and had jurisdiction over a clearly defined territory, namely, his diocese.

Of the principal actors in this reform movement four are mentioned by name in the *Vision*, i.e. Cellach, or Celsus, Archbishop of Armagh (died 1129), whom Marcus terms Celestinus; St. Malachy, his successor, who died in 1148; Christian O'Morgair, Bishop of Clogher, and brother of St. Malachy, who died in 1139, and whom Marcus terms "Bishop of Louth"[1]; and Nehemiah of Cloyne, who died in 1148.

It might here be noted that Marcus tells us almost all that is known about Nehemiah, the first diocesan Bishop of Cloyne. He speaks of him as "a man simple and modest, conspicuous above all for wisdom and chastity . . . renowned for birth and sanctity, a holy and venerable senior."[2] This differs from such eulogistic remarks as are to be found in the *Annals of the Four Masters* in that it comes from the pen of one who was a contemporary and friend of the bishop, and who apparently contemplated writing an account of his life and miracles. He tells us that Nehemiah died in his own See at the age of ninety-five. There are grounds for assuming that he favoured the new movement. His kindliness of heart is shown in the anecdote in Malachy's *Life* (p. 89), in which he is mentioned.

At the Synod of Rathbreasail, which was held in 1110, diocesan episcopacy was established in Ireland. At this Synod it was enacted that there should be thirteen Sees in the northern half of Ireland (Armagh and twelve bishops), and twelve Sees in the

[1] He had transferred the See of the Diocese of Clogher to Louth. (Lawlor, *Bernard's Life of Malachy*, p. 66, n.; J. B. Leslie, *Clogher Clergy and Parishes*, p. 3.)

[2] Wagner, pp. 5, 54.

southern half (Cashel and eleven bishops)—twenty-five Sees in all. This number should be borne in mind. To each of these Sees a district was allotted as a diocese, the boundaries of which were laid down by the Synod.[1]

The Synod of Rathbreasail gave to the Church a "paper constitution" of the approved type. But in the years that elapsed between it and the Synod of Kells (1152) many alterations were made in it. One of these will concern us here, as it is incidentally alluded to in *Tundal*. At Rathbreasail the Diocese of Cloyne is not mentioned; in fact, the bounds of the Diocese of Emly were then laid down to include the territory which afterwards became the Bishopric of Cloyne. But Marcus tells us that in 1149 (*recté* 1148) died Nehemiah, Bishop of Cloyne. Thus, in defiance of the acts of Rathbreasail, Cloyne had been formed into a diocese before that year; but unfortunately we do not know the exact date at which that was done.

But in one passage in the *Vision* (p. 6) Marcus affords us most valuable information with respect to the advance that the new system had made by 1149; indeed, he is the only authority who informs us to what lengths the development of diocesan episcopacy had gone between the Synods of Rathbreasail and Kells. The passage must be quoted in full:

"This island has thirty-four principal cities, the rulers of which are subject to two metropolitans. Armagh is the metropolis of the northern Irish, and of the southern Cashel is the most eminent." (Hec ergo insula civitates habet precipuas triginta

[1] Keating, *History of Ireland* (Ed. Dinneen), vol. iii, pp. 299–307.

quattor, quarum presules duobus subsunt metropolitanis. Artimacha namque septentrionalium Hyberniensium est metropolis, australium autem precellentissima est Caselensis.)

Marcus tells us here that in 1149 there were two archbishops—*metropolitani*—a word which he may have taken from St. Bernard's *Life of Malachy*, where it occurs several times, being once applied to Cashel. Subject to these are the rulers, or bishops (*presules*), of thirty-four *civitates*. The word *civitas*, which is also found in the *Life*, is here used in an ecclesiastical sense, and, in view of the date at which the *Vision* was written, we may take it to mean a See to which a diocese was attached. Thus, in 1149 there were in Ireland thirty-four dioceses, plus the two archiepiscopal ones—thirty-six in all, a very considerable increase on the twenty-five laid down at Rathbreasail. That the information afforded by Marcus is accurate, and that our interpretation of the word *civitas* is correct, is proved by a newly published list of the Synod of Kells,[1] which was held three years later, in 1152.

[1] Lawlor, *A Fresh Authority for the Synod of Kells* (P.R.I.A., vol. xxxvi, p. 18). The force of the word "principal" (*precipuas*) in the passage quoted above from the *Vision* is this: There were some tiny dioceses (certainly within the present diocese of Meath) which were struggling against considerable opposition to preserve themselves as separate entities. There were, furthermore, certain ecclesiastical sites with claims, on the score of sanctity or antiquity, to be Sees of dioceses already formed, or which desired to have small dioceses carved out for themselves. Two places are especially mentioned in this connection, namely, Ardmore in co. Waterford, and Mungret in co. Limerick (Lawlor, *A Fresh Authority*, pp. 18, 21, 22; *Bernard's Life of Malachy*, pp. xxvii–xxix, xlviii–lii).

In this there are thirty-two bishops, plus the four archbishops—thirty-six in all.

Thus the *Vision of Tundal* not merely fits into the ecclesiastical history and eschatology of the twelfth century, but as well throws some welcome light on the very obscure question of the development of diocesan episcopacy between the Synods of Rathbreasail and Kells.

And that Marcus himself approved of the changes in Church organisation may be inferred from the favourable mention made by him in the *Vision* of certain historical personages. Three of the four prelates placed by him in Heaven were reformers: of Nehemiah of Cloyne we know all too little, but he was a friend of St. Malachy,[1] and if, as is possible, Malachy carved the Diocese of Cloyne out of Emly, in defiance of the acts of Rathbreasail, and constituted Nehemiah the first bishop thereof, then that prelate was obviously well disposed towards the changes that were taking place. Two of the three kings mentioned in the *Vision* (Cormac MacCarthy and Conor O'Brien) were also supporters of the new movement.

To us Marcus is but a name. But it should be remembered that we only know of the principal actors in the reform movement of the twelfth century. Had we as detailed a knowledge of that movement as we have, for example, of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1870, we might find that brother Marcus, the friend of King Cormac, played no inconsiderable part therein.

We must now treat of the eschatology of the

[1] Lawlor, *Bernard's Life of Malachy*, p. 89.

Vision and at the same time consider its literary structure, as the two questions are interwoven.

The eschatology is that of the second period as first found in the *Vision of Adamnán*. Hell is the abode of the utterly lost, from which none can ever come forth. The souls described in sections 14–20 are in Paradise. The purgatorial doctrine is greatly stressed, as sections 3–10 and 13 deal with that region, in marked contrast to *Adamnán*, which only devotes a short section to the description of the wandering souls. Indeed, it would seem that Marcus wrote his *Vision* with the object of elaborating that side of the Other-World, though, like *Adamnán*, he avoids giving any definite name to that region.

But the structure of the *Vision* is peculiar and puzzling. Marcus makes a sevenfold division of the Other-World, viz.:

(1) Souls in various classes of pain, who await the judgment of God (sections 3–10 in synopsis).

(2) Souls in Hell who have been judged already, and whose fate is therefore final (sections 11–12).

(3) The expressly named *mali non valde*, who suffer discomfort for some years, and then go to Heaven (section 13).

(4) A wall (of stone ?), beyond which are the expressly named *boni non valde*, who do not yet merit the presence of the saints; and the three Irish kings (sections 14–16).

(5) A wall of silver, beyond which are the married persons who are only in a paradisaical state, as they still look for that blessed hope (section 17).

(6) A wall of gold, beyond which are the martyrs and continent, monks and nuns, defenders and

constructors of churches (sections 18–20). These, too, are apparently in Paradise.

(7) A wall constructed of fourteen different kinds of precious stones with gold for mortar ; this seems to mark the outer limits of Heaven. Beyond it are the " virgins," the nine orders of angels, etc., and the Presence of God (sections 21–3).

It is apparent from this analysis that our *Vision* has been greatly influenced by *Adamnán*. The sevenfold division of his Other-World has been suggested to Marcus by the description of the Seven Heavens found in that Vision, and also elsewhere in Irish literature. And this influence extends to details. In both Visions the souls reach their respective locations immediately after death. As the damned soul in *Tundal* is led to suffer all the lesser punishments before being cast into Hell, so the sinner in his ascent through the Seven Heavens suffers in five of them before his final sentence is uttered. Contrariwise, the righteous soul in *Tundal* is brought to see the pains, but does not suffer them ; in *Adamnán* he passes almost unscathed through the Heavens. In *Tundal* the sinner is led to the Divine Presence in order that he may realise how much glory and happiness he has wilfully cast away ; much the same occurs in *Adamnán*. The ascent of Tundal's soul from Hell to Heaven is an echo of the upward progress of souls through the Seven Heavens ; while the walls through which he passes have some connection, no doubt, with the walls surrounding the City of God. Furthermore, in both visions the soul is met by its guardian angel as soon as it leaves the body, con-

ducted by him through the unseen, led into Heaven itself, not permitted to remain in glory, but ordered to return to the world, and preach what it had seen to mankind. The inexplicable point is that nowhere in the *Vision of Adamnán*, nor in *Tundal* (which is so definitely purgatorial), is a single word said regarding the efficacy of almsgiving, prayers, or masses for the dead. All the souls, both fairly good and fairly bad (except Tundal's *mali non valde*), must remain in their allotted states until judgment.

An obvious question with regard to the literary structure of *Tundal* suggests itself here: Why does it include *two* purgatorial states, separated from each other by Hell, and *two* paradisaical states, viz. that of the *boni non valde*, and that of the souls in sections 17–20?

We would explain this problem as follows: Marcus has been determined to model his Other-World on the plan of the Seven Heavens. At the same time the idea of the fourfold division of souls immediately after death, as found in *Adamnán* and *Drithelm* (of which more later), has been in his mind, as it represents the opinion held by the reformers in the Irish Church. He was desirous of making use of both these conceptions, and in order to do so has adopted the following method of working: beyond Hell he has placed what is really a second purgatorial state (which gives him an additional department in his Other-World), and has termed its inhabitants *mali non valde* (which introduces the conception of the fourfold division). He has applied the expression *boni non valde* (again the fourfold conception) to those in Paradise; and

then has introduced another paradisaical state beyond the silver wall (which gives him another department). Thus the peculiar structure of the *Vision* is due to the fact that a fourfold division has been placed in the setting of a sevenfold division. It should be noticed that the Latin terms do not occur in *Adamnán*, so Marcus must have borrowed them from some other source; apparently, as has been already suggested, they were phrases that were current in Irish eschatological circles.

Thus it can be seen that the *Vision of Tundal* stands at the end of a long line of development, and represents, especially in the fullness of its purgatorial teaching, the newer eschatological views, more in accordance with those held by Western Christendom, which had come to Ireland as part of the movement towards reform.

We must now consider the question of the literary sources, non-Irish and Irish, which Marcus drew upon for the form and matter of his Vision.

Priority of place must be conceded to the Northumbrian *Vision of Drithelm*, a product of the Celtic Church in England, which is dated 696. This must be dealt with at some length, as it not merely influenced the form (the fourfold division) of the Vision, but supplied some of the matter as well.[1]

Drithelm fell sick, and died one night, but came to life the following morning, and thereupon related his experiences in the Other-World. He

[1] Drithelm's Vision is in Bede, H.E., book v, chap. xii; it is also included in Ælfric's *Homilies*, and in Migne, P.L., vol. cxlvi, col. 380, that of the Monk of Wenlock being also given in *ibid.*, col. 375.

was met by a Being with shining countenance and bright raiment, who led him towards the north-east to a valley of great breadth, one side of which was full of flames, the other of hail and snow. The region was thronged with souls which longed in their agony from heat to cold, and from cold to heat in their desire for relief. His guide told Dicuilus that the most prominent therein were those who had only repented at the point of death, but who would ultimately be received into Heaven at the Judgment, while many of them could be relieved before that day by the good deeds performed on their behalf by the living, such as prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and especially by masses. This corresponds, not merely to the particular episode in *Fronia*, written a few years later, but generally to all the purgatorial poems.

Then his angelic guide led him through darkness which grew ever more and more dense, until they arrived at the mouth of a great pit, that of Hell, out of which were rising and falling dark spirit globes of black flame filled with human souls. Suddenly the angel disappeared, and as Dicuilus stood alone in terror he heard the noise of piteous lamentations and hideous laughter. The noise came from a band of evil spirits whom he beheld dragging some newly arrived souls into the depths of Hell. Whereupon one of these demons ran at the terrified abbot, and rushed at him with outstretched claws, but these were suddenly put to flight by, as it were, the appearance of a star shining amid the darkness, which rapidly approached. This was the returning angel (cf. *Tundal*, sections 3 and 11).

The difference between the two visions here are

noteworthy. Drithelm gives no explanation of the cause of the ascent and descent of the flames, which Tundal discovers to be proceeding from the intake and out-take of the Devil's breath. Nor does Drithelm describe Lucifer's appearance. With good literary taste Marcus has omitted the episode of the souls being dragged to perdition, and by this has concentrated the attention of the reader on the loneliness and consequent terror of Tundal.

From this the angel led him towards the south-east, and soon both came into an atmosphere of clear light. Before them lay a vast wall, which they passed, but how Drithelm knew not, and then came into a field full of fragrant flowers, where the light was brighter than that of the sun at noon-day. Here were innumerable assemblies of people in white, and many companies seated together rejoicing. This was the resting-place of those who had died in good works, but who were not so perfect as to merit being admitted to Heaven before the Judgment. This corresponds to *Tundal*, section 14, and generally to sections 14–20.

Having passed this place Drithelm saw before him a much more beautiful light, and heard sweet voices singing, while an exquisite fragrance was wafted to him. This was Heaven itself, into which Drithelm, unlike Tundal, was not permitted to enter. He was then informed by the angel that he must return again to his body, and was warned that he must spend the remainder of his life in a more holy manner. He abhors the idea of returning to the body, but in a moment finds himself alive amongst men (cf. *Tundal*, section 24).

The influences of the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great[1] on the Vision is not inconsiderable. In book IV, chap. xxxviii, Gregory describes how a young man Theodore became a monk by necessity rather than choice, and, naturally, found the religious life irksome. He died in a plague, and would have been buried except for the fact that a little heat remained in his breast. (Cf. *Tundal*, section 1.) Subsequently he recovered and changed his manner of life. In the same book, chap. xxxvi, it is related that a certain monk Peter died, but came to life again. He said he saw vast regions of flame in which were *hujus saeculi potentes* (Tundal saw *potentes seculi* in Hell).[2] As he himself was about to be cast into the flames an angel in shining garments appeared and rescued him (cf. *Tundal*, section 11), and warned him for the future to live as he should (cf. *Tundal*, section 24). On his return to the world Peter lived a most rigorous life of mortification and penance, so much so that if his tongue had remained silent concerning what he had seen his manner of life would have declared it. Similarly, what Tundal suffered in the belly of the beast Acheron the pallor of his countenance and his subsequent mode of life would have made plain to all, even if he had not told it.[3]

In the same book and chapter it is told how a certain soldier died in a plague, and came to life again. In the course of his adventures he came to a bridge, beyond which lay pleasant meadows. There

[1] Books I, III, and IV in Migne, P.L., vol. lxxvii; book II in *ibid.*, vol. lxvi.

[2] Wagner, p. 38.

[3] Wagner, p. 17.

he saw a golden house being built for a certain person (cf. the empty seat in *Tundal*, section 23). All who tried to cross the bridge fell off, except a *peregrinus presbyter* (the exact phrase in *Tundal*),[1] who crossed in safety because he had led a good life.

We are told in the *Vision* that when the Devil draws in his breath all the souls fall back into his mouth, and are devoured by him, and when he exhales his breath he blows and scatters all the souls to the different parts of Gehenna. Parallels to this and other points in Marcus's description of Hell are found in the Vision beheld by Alberic of Monte Cassino, which is usually dated about 1100.[2] In it are seen the regions of Tartarus (*loca tartarea*) and the mouth of the infernal abyss, which seemed like a well. By it was a worm of infinite magnitude bound with a chain, of which one end was in the abyss. Before its mouth stood a multitude of souls; when it drew in its breath it swallowed them all down at the one time; and when it exhaled its breath it ejected them burnt like ashes. This pain was purgatorial.

A parallel passage is quoted by Ancona, p. 61, from a version of the *Vision of Esdras*. Farther on was seen the mouth of a great pit emitting flames which sometimes ascended and sometimes descended. This was the punishment of simoniacs. Elsewhere were two evil spirits, in the shape of a dog and a lion, from whose fiery breath came all the punishments which were outside Hell; as they emitted their

[1] Wagner, p. 15.

[2] Alberic's Vision is in *Dante, opere minori, rime* (Firenze, 1830), pp. 283 ff. See also Ancona *Precursori de Dante* (Firenze, 1874).

breath they blew away to their respective punishments all the souls that were before them. These parallels are sufficiently striking: did *Tundal* use *Alberic*, or did both draw from a common source? And, if so, what was that common source?

Furthermore, Alberic in his vision sees infants being purged in fiery coals, and is told by his angelic guides that this is done because *nec unius diei infans sine peccato est.* Similarly, Tundal's guide says to him (p. 26): *nemo liber est a peccato nec infans unius noctis.* This has come into both visions from St. Augustine, *Confessiones I*, cap. 7: "Nemo mundus a peccato coram Te, nec infans, cujus est unius diei vita super terram." Alberic also passes through Seven Heavens, but the description of these does not resemble that found in Irish literature.

The *Vision of the Boy William*,[1] dated *circa* 1143–7, may have been read by Marcus, as it contains some parallels to our vision. William is led by a man of noble appearance, and first comes to a valley with fire on one side and cold on another. Farther on, he looks into the pit of Tartarus, and sees the Devil in the midst of the flames *in sex partes distentus.* Does this mean that he sees him stretched bound in torments, as Tundal did? Then they come to a high wall, with no opening, though in some unknown way they get to the other side. Next they see a round house, full of glory; therein are splendidly arrayed men who are acting as attendants to one more splendid, who is

[1] Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, lib. xxvii, caps. 84, 85 (Venetiis, 1591).

wearing a gold crown. It might be noted that Bede [1] describes the vision of a brother who saw Hell open, and the Devil at the bottom thereof.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the *Vision of Tundal* is the account of purgatorial pain being inflicted in Paradise on King Cormac. This very curious conception may possibly be derived from Eastern sources. Places of punishment are found in one or other of the Seven (or more) Heavens in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Ed. Charles), in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (Ed. Morfill and Charles), in the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* (Ed. Charles), and in a Byzantine Apocalypse of the tenth century.[2] It will be remembered, in the Second Heaven in *Adamnán*, the souls of the righteous are purified in a fiery stream. In the *Vision* of the Emperor Charles, recorded by Roger of Wendover under the year 885, the visionary learns that his father Louis is immersed one day in a cask of boiling water to his thighs, and the next in a cask of cold water.

Something must here be said with respect to certain passages and quotations in our Vision. On p. 3 (Wagner) Marcus credits "a certain learned member of the orthodox" with the following saying: *Vires, quas imperitia denegat, caritas ministrat.* I cannot find the source of this quotation.

On p. 4 he quotes the proverb: *Amici vitia si non sufferas, facis tua.* This is a paraphrase of a wrong version of a line in the *Sententiae* of Publius

[1] H.E., book v, chap. 14.

[2] L. Radermacher, *Anonymi Byzantini de Caelo et Infernis Epistula* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 16.

Syrus, viz. *Amici vitia nisi feras, facias tua.* So all MSS., except one which Spengel in his edition of the *Sententiae* follows in restoring the line (10 in his ed.) as *Amici vitia si feras, facias tua.*[1]

The influence of Virgil is to be seen in two passages. The description of Vulcan and his tormentors,[2] may be compared with *Æneid*, viii, ll. 419 ff., 452 ff. Again, p. 35, ll. 19, 20, are dependent upon *Æneid*, vi, ll. 625 ff.

The Rule of St. Benedict[3] is quoted in three places: (1) Wagner, p. 29, l. 12: *Qui per tonsuram Deo mentiri noscuntur* is taken from the Rule, cap. i; (2) p. 38, l. 10: *Prelati . . . qui desiderant preesse, non ut prosint, set ut presint* is an indirect quotation from the Rule, cap. lxiv; (3) The Angel's speech on p. 49, ll. 1–11, shows in a marked degree the influence of the Rule, caps. v and vi.

We must now deal with the question of the use made by Marcus of Irish literature, ecclesiastical and secular. Of the influence of the *Vision of Adamnán* and that of Drithelm, enough has been said.

The description of the Devil as a many-handed monster is based on a conception which runs through Irish literature. It is found in the *Voyage of the Ui Corra*, in the *Tidings of Doomsday*, in the *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday*, and in the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*, vol. II, p. 32 (42).[4] It may possibly be derived from one of the mediæval versions of the *Vision of St. Paul*, in which is given the description

[1] I owe this information to Dr. E. H. Alton, F.T.C.D.

[2] Wagner, p. 31. [3] Migne, P.L., vol. lxvi.

[4] For the detailed description of the infernal monster, see C.Z., vol. xiv, p. 187.

of a many-headed dragon in Hell named Parthemon. Lucifer's tail, spiky for the tormenting of souls, resembles the angel's thorn-rod in the modern version of the *Ever-New Tongue*,[1] each thorn of which has a hundred points, and makes a hundred wounds on the face of each sinner.

The most extraordinary feature in the description of Hell in *Tundal* is, that the writer represents the Devil as suffering torment, in contrast to other visions of Hell, in which Satan and his satellites are represented as enjoying immunity from pains while inflicting them on the damned. This appears to be based on a passage in the *Tidings of Doomsday*, though Marcus has missed the ethical point, in which it is said that the Devil is punished in exact proportion to the amount of sin he has caused men to commit. "A curse from him (the Abbot of Hell, i.e. the Devil) on monks about him, to wit, on the sinners, since the greater is his own punishment for every evil they did through his seduction of them, inciting to every evil." In the French version P. of *Tundal*,[2] the Devil torments each soul, and each soul torments him. The metrical Middle-English version (p. 80) contains much the same idea:

> The more payne, that he there wrought
> To the soules, that theder wer brought,
> The more payne his owne was.

Marcus has also come under the influence of the *Imrama*. The huge and grotesque monsters ready to devour the wayfarer, the demon blacksmiths,

[1] R.C., vol. xxviii, p. 297.
[2] Friedel and Meyer, *La Vision de Tondale*, p. 39.

the vast tree full of birds, are all familiar *Imrama*-features. And indeed, the Vision itself might be regarded as an *Imram* with an Other-World background. As the ordinary travellers voyage over Ocean, visiting islands whereon are staged scenes of joy or woe, so the soul of Tundal voyages through the Unknown, visiting various abodes of pain or bliss, each of which is complete, self-contained, and separated from the other abodes by an appreciable distance which must be travelled.

He also betrays knowledge of the romantic side of ancient Irish literature. The two giants who act as props to keep a demon monster's jaws agape in purgatory are Fergus MacRoich and Conall Cernach, two heroes of the Red Branch Cycle of Tales. Why Marcus has singled out these two for such ignominious treatment is not clear, but there may possibly be here an allusion to some ancient tale which has not come down to our day.

The guest-house (*hospitium*) of Phristin, which is never too full to receive fresh guests, is an allusion to the traditional " house of hospitality " in ancient Ireland, concerning which tales are extant. In the two Irish versions of the Vision the *hospitium* of Phristin is rendered " tech osda," i.e. " house of hospitality."

Certain words and phrases occur in the *Vision* which are either borrowed from Irish liturgies or else are reminiscent of the same. These will now be given as far as I have been able to collect them.

The following passage occurs three times under slightly varying forms :

(1) Qui non vult mortem peccatoris.[1]

[1] Wagner, p. 10, l. 19.

(2) Ipse non desiderat mortem peccatoris, set ut convertatur et vivat . . .[1]

(3) Rex eterne glorie, qui non vis mortem peccatoris, set ut convertatur et vivat . . .[2]

The entire phrase *qui . . . vivat*, as in no. 3, is found in the Book of Dimma and the Stowe Missal. (Cf. the Third Collect for Good Friday in the Book of Common Prayer.) The same phrase, with the words *Rex gloriae* prefixed (where Marcus has *Rex eterne glorie*), occurs in the Missale Gothicum. It is worth noting that the sentence *Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed volo potius ut convertatur, et vivat* is found in the apocryphal Life of St. John, by Pseudo-Abdias.[3] The phrase is derived from Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

P. 49, l. 13: *Omnium bonorum largitori.* The phrase *auctor omnium bonorum* occurs in the Book of Dimma.[4]

P. 11, l. 12: *Semper et ubique.* Apparently a common liturgical phrase. It is found in the St. Gall MS., 1394[5] and in the Westminster Missal.[6]

P. 10, l. 20: *Cui soli competit, medicinam prestare post mortem.* The word *medicinam* may have been introduced from Irish liturgies. It occurs in a *Missa de Infirmis* in the Books of Dimma and Mulling and in the Stowe Missal.[7]

The word *seniores* (p. 47, l. 16) may be liturgical.[8]

[1] P. 32, l. 10. [2] P. 47, l. 2.
[3] Fabricius *Codex Apocr. N.T.*, p. 572.
[4] Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, p. 170.
[5] Warren, p. 176.
[6] H.B.S., vol. i, p. 70; vol. ii, pp. 576, 622.
[7] Warren, pp. 167, 172, 221.
[8] Warren, pp. 203, 260.

On p. 45, l. 10, occurs an unusual form of the Doxology, i.e. *gloria tibi, deus pater, gloria tibi, fili, gloria tibi, spiritus sancte.*

The *Te Deum* is quoted three times on p. 52, ll. 16–19, with an obvious allusion to its conclusion on p. 51, l. 17.

Some other passages in the *Vision* may be considered in connection with this section of our paper. On p. 8 occurs the following passage: "Ille (Tundal), interrogantibus se, si vellet communicare, innuit afferri corpus domini, et cum illum sumeret, et vinum biberet," etc. This passage apparently refers to Communion in one kind, the wine being merely drunk as a restorative. Warren[1] gives evidence for Communion in both kinds being the practice of the early Irish Church; but the reforming party in the twelfth century would almost certainly introduce the custom of that under one kind only.

Are the following clauses liturgical?:

(1) *O Deus, major est misericordia tua, quam iniquitas mea, licet mea sit magna nimis* (p. 9, l. 2).

(2) *Sicut vis et scis (miserere servi tui)* (p. 44, l. 18).

These two clauses are combined into one sentence in the account of the visit of Laurence Rathold to St. Patrick's Purgatory in 1411. "Jesu Christe, miserere nobis; sicut vis et sicut scis, ita miserearis, quia major est misericordia (tua) quam iniquitas nostra, licet magna sit."[2]

[1] Pp. 134, 164, 177, 192, 243, 267.

[2] F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford, 1881). The account of Rathold's visit to St. Patrick's Purgatory is in *Analecta Bollandiana*, t. xxvii, p. 56.

It has already been pointed out that the *Vision*, which, it must be remembered, is written in Latin, is full of Scriptural quotations, from a study of which it is possible to gain some information as to the nature of the Biblical text read by Marcus. This important question has been carefully examined by the Very Rev. H. J. Lawlor in his paper, *The Biblical Text in Tundal's Vision*.[1] It is sufficient to say that he finds there evidence for the use of an Old-Latin text, of a slightly mixed text, and of a psalter which seems to have been Vulgate with Old-Latin mixture. In addition, the *Vision* has a few readings, not found elsewhere, which may be Old-Latin.

It may be assumed that Marcus did not intend that the *Vision* should remain at Ratisbon, but that it should be carried back to Ireland by some of his compatriots. For the good ladies of St. Paul's would have taken but a faint interest in the salvation, or otherwise, of, to them, three obscure Irish kings; while their former subjects in Munster would have been very desirous of knowing what fate had befallen them in the Other-World. So we may suppose that it was speedily borne back to Munster and perhaps to Cashel. But the *Vision* proved of more than local interest. Through it Marcus has won a considerable degree of immortality, for it soon became one of the most popular of mediæval visions. It was widely circulated throughout Europe, and was translated into several languages and dialects. Manuscripts of it are numerous, and in the earliest days of printing, several editions of it issued from the presses.

[1] P.R.I.A., vol. xxxvi.

In conclusion, a word may be said regarding the many-sided value of the Vision. It has been described as harsh and grotesque, bordering on buffoonery, and full of coarse imagery. That may be true to a certain degree, but those who thus criticise it have not realised how valuable it proves to be in other respects. It supplements our meagre knowledge of the life of King Cormac MacCarthy, the builder of Cormac's Chapel on the Rock of Cashel, and of that of Nehemiah, first diocesan bishop of Cloyne. It throws some light on the contemporary ecclesiastical history in Ireland, and indeed is the only source of information as to the development of diocesan episcopacy in our land after the Synod of Rathbreasail and before that of Kells. It enables us to form a conception of the Biblical text read in Munster in the first half of the twelfth century. And finally, it affords us a picture of the wide and varied reading, in the Bible, and in secular and ecclesiastical literature, of Marcus, the monk of Cashel of the Kings.

Chapter VII

THE VISION OF THE KNIGHT OWEN

Outline of the Story. Accounts of the Origin of the Cave. How and when the Vision was committed to Writing. Parallels between it and the *Vision of Paul*. And of *Tundal*. Fundamental Differences. Purgatorial Teaching. Is the Vision an Irish One? Conclusion.

IN Lough Derg, in co. Donegal, which must not be confused with its larger namesake on the Shannon, there is a small island, indifferently named Station Island, or St. Patrick's Purgatory.[1] Here formerly might be seen a cave or grotto, into which it was believed that if a man entered as a penitent he would behold the bliss and pain of the Other-World, and, as a result of his visit, be purged of his sins. The account of the descent of the knight Owen into this cave, and his adventures therein, is one of the most widely spread and best known of mediæval visions, prior to the time of Dante, and is preserved in numerous manuscripts in England and on the Continent. As hitherto, we shall give an outline of the story, and then discuss certain points that arise.

Introductory

In the reign of King Stephen (apparently an *Irish* king) a certain knight named Owen went to visit his parents in Ireland, which was his native country. While there, he began to call to mind his

[1] Seymour, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*. The Latin text of the Vision will be found in Migne, P.L., t. clxxx, cols. 989–1002.

wicked life, and the many sins he had committed; and, filled with remorse, determined to do penance in St. Patrick's Purgatory. Having obtained, though with considerable difficulty, the necessary licence from the bishop, he went to the prior of the Purgatory, and after fifteen days' fasting and prayer he was put into the cave.

At first it was quite dark, but gradually grew lighter. The knight proceeded until he found himself in an open plain, in which stood a building like a cloister, enclosed by pillars. This he entered, and sitting down, began to admire it. Shortly after fifteen men, like monks, came in, and told him that on their departure a swarm of demons would come, who would endeavour to seduce him by threats and promises; if he yielded to them he would perish, both soul and body, but if he invoked the name of Jesus he would be able to escape every danger.

They had scarcely disappeared when the hall was filled with a host of hideous demons. As he refused to listen to them they kindled a fire, through which they dragged him by iron hooks. But when he invoked the sacred name the fire was immediately quenched.

The First Plain of Punishment

The demons then dragged Owen through a wilderness, where the earth was black, and swept by an icy wind. They went towards the East, where the sun rises in midsummer, and when they seemed to have reached the end of the world

they turned to the right, and went towards the point where the sun rises in mid-winter. At length they came out upon a large plain. The surface was covered with hapless persons, of both sexes, naked and lying with their faces on the ground, being fixed thereto by red-hot nails, driven through their hands and feet. Demons continually coursed over them, scourging them as they went. The devils tried to nail Owen to the ground, like the others, but he invoked the name of Jesus, and so escaped.

The Second Plain of Punishment

Then the demons brought him to a second plain, which was similarly covered with persons nailed to the ground, except that they lay on their backs. Fiery dragons, or enormous toads, sat upon some of them, and gnawed them with iron teeth, while around others fiery serpents were coiled.

The Third Plain of Punishment

Here was to be found a number of naked persons who were nailed to the ground with red-hot nails planted so thickly in their bodies that one could not insert a finger between them. They were also tormented by a bitter wind. They tried to cry out, but could only emit a feeble sound, like that coming from the lips of a dying man.

The Fourth Plain of Punishment

Here was an immense multitude of persons hung in fiery chains by their heads, hair, arms,

hands, feet, and other organs. Others were suspended by fiery hooks fixed in various members of the body. Some souls were fixed on frying-pans, while others were fixed on spits which were being turned by demons. Here Owen recognised some of his acquaintances and relations.

The Wheel

Next the demons dragged him to an immense red-hot wheel, half of which was in the air, while the lower half was in the ground, and passed through a pit of burning sulphur in its revolutions. To its spokes and tires men were fixed by red-hot nails, and the dread ministers of Tartarus impelled it so rapidly with iron rods that it seemed one circle of fire. The demons, as before, tried to make Owen endure the torment, but he escaped.

The Bath-house

After this the demons brought him to an enormous house, from whence issued dense smoke. When they were a little way off he stood still, fearing to draw nearer, because of the great heat which came from it. But he was compelled to approach, and found the house filled with pits containing sulphur and molten metal. In there the souls were immersed, some wholly, some to their eyes, some to their breasts, others again to their knees, while others again had only one hand or foot in the liquid.

The Mountain and River

Then the demons hurried the knight to the summit of a lofty mountain, where was a vast number of people sitting naked, facing the north. Suddenly a violent tempest from that part swept down upon them, and hurled them, together with the knight and devils, into a stinking lake of icy water. When the souls tried to rise above the surface the demons drove them under.

The Supposed Pit of Hell

Next his fiendish guides dragged him to the edge of a deep pit like a well. Out of this arose a flame in which were naked souls, all red-hot. When the flame ascended they rose with it like sparks, and when it subsided they fell back into the pit. The demons told him that this was Hell, and that unless he promised to go no farther, but return at once to the entrance to the Purgatory, they would drag him into it, where he would perish body and soul. The knight refused, whereupon the demons hurled themselves into the pit, dragging him with them; and the deeper he sank the more terrible were the punishments he beheld. In his terror he almost forgot to invoke the name of Jesus, but recollecting himself in time, he uttered his prayer, and in a moment was driven up in the flames and found himself at the pit's mouth. Then a fresh band of demons emerged from the abyss, and said to him: "Our comrades told you that this was the mouth of Hell, but it is not so; we are in the habit of telling falsehoods, so that if we cannot deceive

by the truth we may do so by what is false. This is not Hell, but we shall now lead you thither."

The River and Bridge

These new adversaries then dragged Owen to a broad fiery river filled with demons, who told him that that river was Hell. It was spanned by a bridge which it seemed impossible to cross for three reasons: it was exceedingly slippery; it was so narrow that a person could not stand upon it; and thirdly, it rose so high in the air that it made one dizzy even to contemplate it. The demons told him he must cross it, and promised him that the wind would blow him into the river, where the others would catch him. Invoking the name of Christ, the knight ascended the bridge, and the farther he went, the wider it became. Seeing him walk so freely, the demons shook it with their cries, while those in the river threw red-hot hooks of iron at him, but to no avail.

Paradise

When he had crossed the bridge he came to a high wall, having in it one gate, which was shut; this gate was adorned with precious stones. As he approached, it opened, and a procession issued forth to meet him, bearing crosses, banners, and golden palm-branches; in it were men and women, and ecclesiastcis of every rank. He was conducted into Paradise by two archbishops, who pointed out to him the most delightful meads adorned with fruits and flowers, and many kinds of herbs and trees.

Therein he saw a vast multitude of people, some of whom wore crowns, while others were clad in robes of different colours, green, blue, purple, hyacinthine, white. The two archbishops told him that this was the terrestrial paradise from which Adam was expelled for disobedience, and that its inhabitants were being gradually taken up into Heaven.

The prelates then led him to the sloping side of a mountain, and bade him look up. He saw a place that seemed to be the colour of gold molten in the furnace. They told him that that was the gate of Heaven. As they spoke, a ray of light descended from Heaven, and the flame, settling in rays upon the heads of each, entered their bodies. Owen felt such a delicious sweetness pervade his body that he did not know if he were alive or dead. "This," said the prelates, "is the food with which God feeds us every day."

Then they told him that he must return to earth by the way he came, and that he need not fear the assaults of the demons. With weeping and lamentation Owen besought that he might remain where he was, but in vain. As he retraced his steps the devils fled before him and the torments were unable to touch him; finally he reached the door of the Purgatory, which was opened by the prior. He remained for fifteen days in prayer in the church, after which he took the cross, and went on pilgrimage to the Holy land.

It should be borne in mind that from the commencement of the thirteenth century to its suppression in 1497 the cave of St. Patrick's Purgatory had a European reputation, and was visited by

pilgrims from countries even so far off as Hungary. What was the nature of the cave to which so many resorted, and what was its origin as a place of pilgrimage ?

The first question can be answered in a fairly satisfactory manner. The mysterious cave was an artificial building of stone, standing a little above the level of the ground. It was entered by a door at one end, and descent was made into it by half a dozen stone steps. The interior consisted of two small rooms, an outer and an inner. The former measured approximately nine feet in length, three in breadth, and four in height. The inner room, which was the smaller of the two, being anything from three to five feet long, and the same width and height as the former, did not have its axis in a straight line with that of the outer room, but inclined somewhat to the left-hand side ; at its far end there was a deep pit covered with a stone. Why it had two rooms, inclining to each other at an obtuse angle, we do not know ; except perhaps that these followed the line of a passage leading to the deep pit, which last, as appears from the story of the Canon of Windesheim, seems to have represented the original "Purgatory." Guillebert de Lannoy, in 1430, alludes to this pit, which he calls the mouth of Hell, and says that St. Patrick stopped it with a stone. The Canon of Windesheim (sometimes known as the Monk of Eymstadt) was actually lowered by a rope into this pit.

What was its origin ? The most popular legend is that when St. Patrick endeavoured to convert the Irish people to Christianity by preaching to

them of the happiness of Heaven and the misery of Hell, they said they would never believe unless one of their number were permitted to see these things for himself. Patrick was naturally in despair at this unreasonable demand. But our Lord appeared to him, and led him into a desert place, where He showed him a round pit, and said, "Whatever man, being truly penitent, and armed with a lively faith, shall enter that pit, and there remain for a day and a night, shall be purged from all his sins, and going through it shall behold the states of bliss and woe." Thereupon the saint built a church there, and in it placed Canons Regular of St. Augustine—an obvious anachronism! He surrounded the ditch (*fossa*, i.e. the purgatorial cave) which is in the cemetery outside the front of the church, with a wall, and fitted it with gates and locks, lest any should seek to enter it rashly without permission, and then entrusted the key to the keeping of the prior of the Canons Regular.

According to other accounts the saint either traced a large circle on the ground, or smote it with his staff, a deep chasm subsequently making its appearance. Later writers seem to tone down the crudeness of the original legend by suggesting that St. Patrick beheld in the cave visions of the Other-World, as a result of which he ordered that people should visit it for the purpose of fasting and prayer.

Such are the Christian stories of the origin of the Purgatory. But pagan legends, which are possibly much older, are also connected with the district. It is said that the lake got its name of

Lough Derg, the "red Lake," as follows. A monster, which sprang from the thigh-bone of an old witch, used to ravage the countryside, devouring people and cattle. It was killed by Finn MacCumhaill, who plunged his sword into a certain part of its side, and the blood that flowed in torrents from the wound ran into the lake, and tinged all its waters a crimson hue—hence its name. Previous to this it had been known as Lough Finn, the "fair lake." According to a more modern form of the legend the monster was named Caoranach. Antonio Mannini, who visited the Purgatory in 1411, declares that he saw a great black bird named Corna which was really a demon which had been turned into that shape by St. Patrick. James Yonge, in his account of the pilgrimage of Laurence Rathold, made in the same year, also speaks of the bird Cornu. Richardson, in his *Folly of Pilgrimages* (1727), p. 6, says that the stone image of Caoranach was to be seen in his own day.

It seems probable that in pre-Christian, perhaps even in pre-Celtic, times the cave or pit on the little island in Lough Derg was a well-known heathen sanctuary, where, it may be, oracles were delivered, or communication was established with a world beneath the earth, or a deity worshipped, of which the bird-like demon Cornu was but a pale image.

Of the movements of St. Patrick in Ireland during the years of his mission we know all too little. But it may safely be conjectured that he visited prominent heathen sanctuaries with the object of overthrowing the idols and their accom-

panying worship, and of preaching the Gospel of Christ. Now if Lough Derg were then renowned for its heathen rites it may well be that the saint visited it with the same laudable object, though it must be remembered that his name is not historically connected with the spot until the twelfth century.

Station Island (the island of the purgatorial cave) and Saints' Island adjoining appear to have formed one Celtic monastery, which was possibly overrun and demolished by the Northmen in one of their raids. But between 1130 and 1134 it passed into the hands of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. The custom of making pilgrimages to the cave must have commenced long before this date, though possibly the earliest historical allusion to a pilgrim is found about the year 1152, when the famous Dervorgil sent a message to Dermot MacMurrough asking him to come and take her away, as her husband, Tiernan O'Rourke, was absent on a pilgrimage to "the cave of St. Patrick's Purgatory."[1] From this on there is a lengthy list of pilgrimages down to the demolition of the cave in 1497, though that by no means broke the continuity of pilgrimage.

The knight Owen, according to Roger of Wendover, went on pilgrimage to the Purgatory in the year 1154. But the story of his experiences therein in the form in which we now have it took its final shape, and was committed to writing, many years later. To endeavour to recover the order of events, and to show the arguments for a late date

[1] Keating, *History of Ireland* (ed. Dinneen), vol. iii, p. 319.

for the committal to writing, will now be our task.

Owen visited the Purgatory in 1153. This date may be assumed to be historical. Immediately after this he took the Cross, and journeyed to the Holy Land, subsequently returning to Ireland. Some time after his return Gervase, first abbot of Louth in Lincolnshire (founded 1147) was granted by King Stephen (apparently an *Irish* king) land in Ireland whereon to found a monastery, and sent Gilbert of Louth and some other monks into the country to take possession of it. Gilbert, on his arrival, complained that he was ignorant of the language of the country, whereupon the king summoned Owen, and bade him act as interpreter. Owen and Gilbert remained together for two and a half years, when Gilbert returned to England, and became Abbot of Basingwerk, before midsummer 1159. During their association together the knight told Gilbert of his experiences in the purgatorial cave.

After his return to England Gilbert often related the story just as he had heard it from the lips of Owen. Amongst his audience on one occasion was a certain H., a monk of Saltrey in Huntingdonshire, commonly known as Henry of Saltrey, who gave the story its final form in writing. In a prologue to the narrative he addresses a certain Henry of Sartis, who had asked some questions respecting it. This person is supposed to be Henry of Wardon in Bedfordshire, who became abbot of that house, probably not before 1170, and who left it for Rievaulx in April 1215. It was

at his request that Henry of Saltrey committed the story to writing.[1]

But apparently before doing so Henry of Saltrey made enquiries respecting the Purgatory. He says that he questioned two Irish abbots, one of whom testified to the truth of the matter. He also interrogated an Irish bishop, Florentian by name, the nephew of the third St. Patrick, that is, the companion of St. Malachy (*nepotem S. Patricii tertii, socii videlicet S. Malachae*), who said that the Purgatory lay in his diocese, and added that many had perished therein, and that those who returned safely were always thereafter pale and weak. Now this Bishop Florentian can be none other than Florence O'Carolan, who was placed over the See of Maghera (afterwards Derry) in 1185, and who died in 1230.[2]

All this points to a late date for the committal to writing. Henry of Saltrey may have met with the Irish abbots and Bishop Florentian at councils which were held at Canterbury in 1189, at Westminster in 1190, and at London in 1191. On the other hand, as the earliest manuscripts of the story go back to the late twelfth century, the committal to writing of the narrative in its final form may lie between 1185 and *circa* 1190. The story of Owen's

[1] H. L. D. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in British Museum*, vol. ii, pp. 434 ff. P. de Félice, *l'Autre Monde*, p. 29–31.

[2] It has also been suggested that he is to be identified with Flaherty O'Brolchan, who was appointed Bishop of Derry by a Synod in 1158. (Lynch, *De Historia Ecclesiae Hiberniae*. MS. T.C.D., K. 6·15, f. 225.) The "third St. Patrick" is presumably Mael Patraic III, Bishop of Armagh, who died in 1096. Nothing appears to be known of him.

adventures was apparently not known to Joscelin of Furness (writing 1180–5), or to Giraldus Cambrensis (writing 1186–7). In truth the purgatorial cave seems to have been only of local importance until the account of Owen's adventures made it known far beyond the confines of Ireland.

Another argument for the late date of the rise to fame of the Purgatory, and also for the publication of the experiences of Owen, may perhaps be drawn from the widely known story of Tundal. The account of the latter's vision was certainly committed to writing early in 1149. If the great efficacy of a sojourn in St. Patrick's Purgatory had been widely known throughout Ireland, it seems quite reasonable to suppose that the author, Brother Marcus, would have sent his hero to expiate his many crimes in the body at Lough Derg, instead of in the spirit.

So much for the question of date. Something must now be said with respect to the sources from which Henry of Saltrey built up his narrative. He has made considerable use of the mediæval form of the *Vision of Paul.* In the fourth field Owen sees persons hanging in fiery chains on hooks by different members of their bodies; Paul[1] sees persons similarly suspended from fiery trees. In the bath-house Owen finds souls either partially or wholly immersed in cauldrons of boiling metal; Paul[2] beholds them similarly immersed in a river which, in one instance, is certainly a burning one. The torment of the fiery wheel (an episode not very

[1] Brandes, p. 75.
[2] Brandes, pp. 65, 76, 97.

common in mediæval visions)[1] is taken from *Paul*. This is proved by the phraseology, for in *Owen* it is *ministri tartaraei*[2] who set it in motion, and in *Paul* (p. 76) it is impelled *ab angelo tartareo*; the former expression is derived from the latter, and that, in its turn, from the angelic name Tartaruch in the fragmentary *Seven Heavens*. The bridge episode in *Owen* may possibly be taken from *Paul* (p. 76).

There are some interesting parallels between *Owen* and the *Vision of Turcill*, which Roger of Wendover gives under the year 1206. Turcill is first of all led into a church arched all round like a cloister (cf. *Owen*). Certain spirits are immersed in a cold lake (cf. *Owen's* river), some more, some less (cf. *Owen's* bath-house). The visionary sees four courts of torment (cf. *Owen's* four plains), in which are cauldrons containing unpleasant liquids, and filled with souls (cf. *Owen's* bath-house). Other souls are placed on revolving wheels of red-hot iron by the "servants of Hell" (cf. *Owen's* wheel, and the *Ministri Tartaraei*). The

[1] Besides those mentioned above the wheel is found in the *Vision of the Boy William* (Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, lib. 27, cap. 84). In that of the Cistercian novice, 1153, Judas Iscariot is bound to a fiery wheel (*ibid.*, lib. 29, caps. 6–10). The wheel also occurs in the late *Vision of Lazarus* (Nisard *Histoire des livres populaires*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 91). It is also found in some of the earliest Christian visions. See M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 390, 517, 523.

[2] This phrase occurs in Migne's text. It does not occur in the Bamberg text printed in *Romanische Forschungen*, vol. vi, pp. 139 ff., nor in Colgan's version, which is printed in parallel columns with the latter.

Mount of Joy has to be reached by an immense spiked bridge (cf. *Owen*). The spirits in the church on the Mount hear at certain hours music from Heaven, with which they are regaled as if with dainty meats (cf. *Owen's* celestial food). There is thus a connection between the two visions, but if if be argued that *Owen* borrowed from *Turcill* this would demand far too late a date for the former Vision. It seems much more probable that the writer of *Turcill* knew of Owen's Vision, and indeed may have learnt it orally from Gilbert of Basingwerk, who, we know, frequently related it.

There are also some points of connection between *Owen* and the *Vision of Tundal*, which would seem to imply borrowing on the part of the former from the latter. As a late date must be demanded for the committal to writing of *Owen*, this is quite possible, for *Tundal's* date is early in 1149, as we have more than once pointed out, and it may be assumed that it was read in English as well as Irish ecclesiastical circles long before the close of that century.

In the fourth field of pain Owen recognises some acquaintances; in Hell Tundal sees some of his friends and relations. Owen is most unwilling to depart from Paradise; Tundal evinces an equal unwillingness to leave Heaven and return to his body. The alleged pit of Hell, in *Owen*, out of which men were ascending like red-hot sparks, and then falling back again, is paralleled in *Tundal* by the true pit of Hell, where souls mingled with demons are ascending and descending. Owen approaches the infernal bath-house, from which smoke is rising, and stands still, fearing to approach

closer on account of the great heat which proceeds from it. Similarly Tundal hesitates to draw nearer to the house of Phristin, from which flame is bursting forth. Owen's meeting with the two Archbishops is paralleled by the account of Tundal's encounter with the group of prelates and saints.

There are, however, two important points of difference between the eschatology of the two visions. In *Tundal* the souls in a purgatorial state (sections 3–10) must abide therein till Judgment, and nothing is said about relief being afforded them by prayers or masses. In *Owen*, however, the purgatorial doctrine is much more clearly enunciated. The Archbishops tell Owen "that penance we did not fulfil in life we do after death in those penal places (*locis poenalibus*) which you have seen, some for a longer, some for a shorter, space of time, according to the amount of our guilt. All of us who are here in this rest have passed through those places, and all those whom you have seen in those penal places, except those in the pit of Hell, will, when they are purged, come hither, and do so every day. Those who are in pains do not know how long they will remain there; but by masses, psalms, prayers, and almsgiving their torments are either mitigated, or they are at length set free. None of us in this place of rest know how long we shall remain here, for just as those in the penal places are detained in accordance with the remnant of their guilt, so we, who are here, remain a longer or shorter time in this rest according to our merits. We have not yet ascended to the celestial joy of the saints, and none of us know when we shall be

called thither. Thus day by day our numbers wax and wane, as some come to us from the pains, while others ascend from us to Heaven."

As a result the conception of Paradise has undergone a change. In *Tundal* it is an abode where souls must remain till Judgment, after which they will be received into Heaven. The inhabitants of that latter abode have gone there immediately after death, but apparently both those in Heaven as well as in Paradise have first of all been led to the purgatorial torments—but do not suffer in the least degree from them—in order that they may see from what they have been delivered by the grace of God. But in *Owen* Paradise serves as a celestial clearing-house; *all* the righteous must first endure the purgatorial pains, which, however, can be mitigated for them by prayers, masses, and the like; from thence they pass to Paradise, and finally enter Heaven

But the second, and most important, difference is this. Tundal suffers torment, and this may have prepared the way for the conception of the visionary not merely beholding the punishments but enduring them too. But Tundal suffers in the spirit only, as his inanimate body remains in the city of Cork. Owen, on the other hand, visits the Other-World, in the flesh, and suffers in his physical body. On this E. J. Becker remarks: "As the cave was a real thing it would obviously not answer to have its honours proclaimed through the medium of a vision seen by the soul only. This would be too incongruous a confusion of reality with unreality, of the actual world with the visionary. The public might, perhaps would, refuse to identify the vague

abode visited by the soul of some visionary with this very material cave, and therefore we are given the unique figure of Owen."

But the conclusion he draws does not seem satisfactory, at least to the present writer. Owen did not visit the Other-World in the body merely because an actual cave existed which had somehow or another to be brought into connection with the story. Rather we may suppose that he visited the cave for penitence and prayer, as pilgrims had done before his time. But it also seems probable that the sojourn in the cave, and perhaps the stories of supernatural visions, were a Christianised form of some pagan rite and belief that had come down from much earlier times.

Has the vision of Owen any claim to be included in a book on *Irish* visions of the Other-World? Owen was an Irishman, as was also apparently his king Stephen, while the cave in which his vision was experienced was certainly located in Ireland. On the other hand, the account of the vision was narrated by one Englishman, and written down in England by another, who certainly drew on non-Irish literary sources. Thus, though for the reasons given in the first part of this paragraph, the vision certainly belongs to Ireland, yet in its literary form and matter there is nothing that can be described as distinctively Irish in it; in this respect it differs to such a marked degree from *Tundal*. It is probable that it represents the eschatological views held in Ireland at the close of the twelfth century, but such would in no way differ from those to be found in England at the same period.

It is not within the scope of this present work to say anything of the literary development of the Owen-story, nor of the crop of visions which sprang from it. That we have done to a certain degree elsewhere. But it is worth noting that the two best known and most widely circulated of all the mediæval visions prior to the time of Dante came from Ireland.

In the pages of this book we have set ourselves the task of studying Irish visions, in some instances using cognate documents, with the principal object of tracing the eschatological development that runs through them. We have shown that in the earlier period the Celtic Church in Ireland drew no line of distinction between Hell and Purgatory, but attributed to the former state the qualities possessed by the latter. Gradually, as a result of that influx of new ideas which culminated in the twelfth-century Reformation, the doctrine of a purgatorial state, as distinct from Hell, emerged. This is stated clearly and tersely in the *Vision of Adamnán*, while the details of the purgatorial state are greatly elaborated in the *Vision of Tundal*, and finally the doctrinal views are given a more modern tinge in the *Vision of Owen*. Thus Irish visions are visions with a purpose beyond that of merely edifying their hearers and readers, and for that reason, if for no other, they cannot be ignored by students of vision literature.

NOTE

The *Vision of Merlino* (*Fís Merlíno*) has been edited and translated by Prof. R. A. S. Macalister,

Litt.D., in C.Z., vol. IV, and also as a separate publication (Dublin, M. H. Gill, 1906); of this last he, with characteristic kindness, sent me a copy. It is a late and composite piece, in which use appears to have been made of the *Imago Mundi*,[1] of some version of the widely popular *Vision of Paul*,[2] of the visions of *Adamnán* and of *Tundal*, and of non-Irish sources.[3] There are in it some characteristically Irish touches, such as the penance in water (p. 64). Owing to its late date, the *Vision of Merlino* does not come within the scope of the present volume; but attention is drawn to it here for the benefit of future students.

[1] Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 95; *Merlino*, pp. 26, 56.
[2] Douglas Hyde, *Legends of Saints and Sinners*; J.T.S., vol. xxiv, p. 57.
[3] Mew, *Traditional Aspects of Hell*, pp. 245, 283; *Merlino*, p. 55.

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